

THE ATTRITION OF DOGMA IN THE LEGAL PRESS  
UNDER BREZHNEV

LITERATURNAYA GAZETA (Second Section)

1967-1971

by

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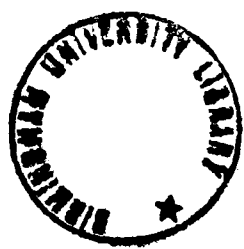
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## SYNOPSIS

The purpose of this thesis is to establish the contribution of the Soviet weekly, Literaturnaya gazeta, to the debunking of official dogmas during the Brezhnev years.

Launched in 1967, the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta has frequently been dismissed as a mere safety valve, highly controlled by the authorities, to placate the educated middle classes demoralized by the conservative backlash.

It is argued in this study that, although the paper accepted the political parameters of the post-Thaw conservative leadership, as evinced, in particular, by the extreme limitations of the economic debates and the absence of any material investigating the country's Stalinist past, it nevertheless succeeded in promoting values which ran counter to the official ideology.

The paper reflected the demoralization of Soviet society and its inability to change within the existing structures. Soviet society emerged as being morally corrupt, riddled with individualism, suspicion and petty authoritarianism. Individuals were shown at the mercy of faceless bureaucracies and overpowered by a judiciary system dominated by the state procuracy.

The paper actively promoted a more individual-centred type of society by overtly challenging the collectivist ethos, campaigning for the recognition of consumer rights and arguing the case for a fairer judiciary system.



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#### A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration system used in this thesis is that of the British Standards Institution (without diacritics). However, names which have a generally accepted English spelling are given in that form, e.g. Gorky.

The name of the sociologist Vl. Shlyapentokh is transliterated according to the British system, unless references are made to the works which he has published in English. On these books his name is spelt Shlapentokh.

## INTRODUCTION

The Soviet media have never received a good press in the West. So the astonishing liberalization triggered off by Gorbachev's policy of glasnost came as the latest and most spectacular proof of the extreme repression which had gagged Soviet journalism over the past seventy years. In the late 1980s reading the press became a completely new experience for both the Soviet public and long-standing observers in the West, who, ironically, were finding it increasingly arduous to keep up with the exciting, yet overwhelming, flood of information and critical debates from all sorts of periodicals. Soviet journalists soon began to wage their battles with censorship in the open, becoming increasingly determined to reclaim their profession from the clutches of political power and to substitute the conveniently hazy notion of glasnost (openness? publicity?) with the more assertive concept of freedom of the press.

While the relatively ill-informed Western general public tends to dismiss the pre-glasnost press as unworthy of any attention, sovietologists have long recognized its importance not only as an institution reflecting the nature of the regime, but also as a valuable, albeit limited and frequently unreliable, source of information. In his book Glasnost in Action, Alec Nove warns the 'nonspecialist reader' for whom

the work is intended against 'simplifying', and points out that '[under] Brezhnev too there emerged some challenging and original material' and that 'even under Stalin's despotism certain types of critical material could see the light of day'.<sup>1</sup>

While Western scholars have always made extensive use of the Soviet press to nourish their particular area of research, the number of works that are specifically concerned with the nature and the role of the Soviet press before the introduction of glasnost is relatively limited. On the whole, these existing studies address two different, yet interconnected issues, that is, on the one hand, the nature and mechanisms of the political censorship; on the other, the scope of the debates and the degree of dissent tolerated by the political establishment.

A number of works indeed tend to focus on what used to make the Soviet press unacceptable in the eyes of Western liberal democracies, namely its partisanship and submission to the ruling party. There have been detailed analyses of the mechanisms by which prescriptive and proscriptive censorship has been implemented. A good example of such a study is Gayle Durham Hollander's book, Soviet Newspapers and Magazines, published in 1967, which the author introduced as an attempt to update the work carried out by Alex Inkeles in the fifties. Hollander examines the overall structure of the Soviet press, including the distribution network and the news agencies, as well as the internal organization of a Soviet

newspaper, emphasizing the role of the editor as 'ideological pace setter'.<sup>2</sup> A great deal of attention is given to the different methods used by the CPSU to control the press. One of them consists of training journalists in the spirit of the official Marxist-Leninist ideology, neatly encapsulated in the famous 'Leninist principles', such as, for example, partiinnost (loyalty to the Party's ideology and goals) and pravdivost (commitment to giving true information), two concepts which, in reality, have turned out to be particularly incompatible.<sup>3</sup> Hollander's study is less informative on the content of Soviet periodicals, focusing on what is missing in comparison with the Western press (no crime or accident section, no advertising etc...) rather than on what the Soviet reader can learn from it.

Further research into the different forms of censorship was carried out in the seventies, in particular by Lilita Dzirkals together with her colleagues Thane Gustafson and A. Ross Johnson. In a chapter from the book Press Control Around the World, published in 1982, Dzirkals discusses the relative importance of the three sources of media control in the Soviet Union: firstly, the Propaganda Department of the CPSU, which plays a dominant role in overseeing the central media, organizing weekly meetings where editors-in-chief receive critical comments on their paper's latest issue and are provided with specific guidelines for the next one; secondly, the ministries, which lobby for their institutional interests through their press centres, controlling the information

concerning their activities by means of the visa procedure; finally, Dzirkals notes the lesser importance of the censorship agencies such as the once all-powerful Glavlit, arguing that the tight control that the Party exerts over the media has resulted in a high degree of self-censorship amongst journalists whose editors have become the effective censors.<sup>4</sup>

A number of analysts, however, have examined aspects of the Soviet press other than its submission to the ruling party, thus greatly enriching our perception of its role and influence. Readership studies, for example, carried out by scholars both in the West and the Soviet Union, have contributed to highlighting the limits of censorship. As Mickiewicz points out in the introduction to her book, Media and the Russian Public, nowhere can it be assumed that the messages put across in the media are automatically received or assimilated by the public, and opinion polls conducted in the Soviet Union have shown that 'the Russian public is much less homogeneous and malleable than the Soviets had thought'.<sup>5</sup>

Another approach has been to demonstrate that the Soviet media can still be a source of information and a forum for debate in spite of the harsh censorship to which it is subjected. This type of research was greatly encouraged by the Khrushchev Thaw when the process of liberalization was evident. Studies focusing on this period have shown that the Soviet system is not necessarily threatened by a relaxation



of the censorship and that the notion of legitimate criticism can indeed be redefined depending on the political mood that prevails within the leadership. This phenomenon has been examined, for example, by Spechler, who argues in her study of Novyi mir, that dissent was tolerated between 1956 and 1964 because it served as a weapon in the power struggle within the leadership. Another factor was the belief held by an increasing section of the political establishment that wider debates were needed to improve the management of the country. For a time the political confusion existing in the higher echelons of power gave courageous and liberally-minded journalists the opportunity to probe the frontiers of the permissible.<sup>6</sup>

While Tvardovskii's Novyi mir has been widely recognized as a truly liberal journal containing bold and genuinely controversial debates, there is less of a consensus amongst analysts when it comes to evaluating the role of the Soviet press as a forum for debate in the much more reactionary Brezhnev years. Most authors, though, accept that some degree of criticism continued to be permitted through the seventies as long as the basic principles on which the whole system rested were not questioned. The articles published between 1982 and 1985 selected by Angus Roxburgh for his book on Pravda cover many of the problems which have long been identified as the commonest targets of the Soviet press, i.e., for example, housing shortages, bad quality consumer goods, inadequate services or women's double burden.<sup>7</sup>

As early as 1970, in an account of the Soviet press that was more sympathetic than most, Mark Hopkins argued that since the mid-fifties the Soviet press had regained its role as 'public forum and social critic' even though 'off-limit areas' had remained.<sup>8</sup> While neither ignoring nor underestimating the weight of political controls and propaganda, Hopkins believes that the authorities do actually value the critical function of the press; they have realized that total submission to political power can only lose the media the credibility they need in order to retain their 'effectiveness as molders and shapers of opinion';<sup>9</sup> hence a substantial amount of open, albeit carefully monitored, controversy that is instrumental in shaping the opinions of both general readers and high-ranking officials responsible for finding solutions to thorny socio-economic problems. Any interest group which is part of the political establishment has the possibility of presenting its scheme and subjecting it to the test of public analysis and criticism through the media, in the hope that the leadership will eventually endorse it. According to Hopkins, there is therefore a visible relation between social developments and the function of the mass media.<sup>10</sup>

Ten years later, Dzirkals, Gustafson and Johnson were more sceptical. In a study carried out on the basis of information obtained between 1978 and 1981 from fifty or so Soviet émigrés 'formerly involved in the media process', the three researchers examined the interaction between political

power and the editorial process, using Literaturnaya gazeta as one of their case studies.<sup>11</sup> While conceding that the Soviet press contains different viewpoints, they reach the conclusion that it cannot be used as a reliable tool for analysing Soviet political life. The general feeling amongst the émigrés interviewed was that 'much controversy is sham', 'at best a distant reflection of behind-the-scenes debates'. Even the quite commonly held view that a skilful reading of the Soviet press can give an insight into the leadership's intentions or the interplay of publicly unavowed political currents seems to be questioned.<sup>12</sup>

The authors of the study do acknowledge that the émigrés' attitude must be treated with some caution and that the dearth of hard information makes it extremely difficult to assess to what extent the Soviet press actually reflects and influences the country's political life. While agreeing that Literaturnaya gazeta was the most interesting and sophisticated Soviet newspaper at least in the early part of the seventies, their assessment of it nevertheless reflects the pessimism of their interviewees and the disappointment of many Soviet intellectuals who eventually deemed the publication 'a demagogic fraud.'<sup>13</sup> The authors' opinion is succinctly summed up in these two extracts from their short study of Literaturnaya gazeta, which is based on a selective reading of it as well as on interviews with former Soviet journalists:

We lack evidence of Literaturnaya gazeta's impact on policy discussions,

but it clearly has sometimes served as a forum for raising and debating new issues on which the leadership has not taken a stand.

The editors of Literaturnaya gazeta may not impress us with the depth or honesty with which they pursue 'interesting' social and economic problems, but at least they raise them. By doing so, they accustom a mass audience to the idea - potentially a highly subversive one - that the shape and evolution of Soviet society and economy are the proper concerns of the broad public...<sup>14</sup>

It is, however, debatable whether the degree of Literaturnaya gazeta's 'liberalism' or 'subversiveness' can be best measured in terms of its impact on the formulation of policies or, for that matter, whether any newspaper, whatever the socio-political system in which it operates, can be directly instrumental in launching a new government policy. Soviet journalists themselves were already at the time questioning the conception of the press as a 'corrective organ' and favoured the idea that the press should concentrate on providing mass information and creating a climate conducive to new ideas.<sup>15</sup>

A different approach, therefore, will be adopted in this study, which is based on a systematic analysis of the content of Literaturnaya gazeta (second section) over a period of five years from January 1967 to December 1971. Rather than attempt to establish a relationship between public debates and policy-making, the aim will be to assess to what extent the shifts in attitudes, values and expectations disclosed by the paper contradict the principles and practices advocated

by the political establishment. Literaturnaya gazeta has been described by the above-mentioned team of researchers as the outcome of 'a conscious high level policy to provide a safety valve for the expression of unorthodox and experimental views'.<sup>16</sup> Safety valves, however, do not last for ever, a fact which the world has been reminded of once more by the extraordinary events triggered off by Gorbachev's brand of liberalization in the mid-eighties; hence the importance of fully appreciating the import of the new ideas which Literaturnaya gazeta helped to publicize during the uninspiring Brezhnev years. It is the purpose of this study to show that the 'liberalism' of Literaturnaya gazeta does not lie only in the acknowledgement that 'the shape and evolution of Soviet society and economy are the proper concern of the broad public'; the paper's 'subversiveness' can indeed be measured more precisely in terms of the level of attention which it gave to the new ideas and attitudes that were emerging in Soviet public opinion in the post-Stalin era, thus contributing to widening the gulf between the Soviet polity and society at large.

#### Literaturnaya gazeta: a paradoxical phenomenon

Accounts of Soviet citizens and circulation figures have shown that Literaturnaya gazeta enjoyed a high level of popularity in the late sixties and early seventies. The increase in circulation figures began in 1967 when the paper had its format radically transformed from a four-page paper

published three times a week into a sixteen-page weekly composed of two very distinct sections of eight pages each. The first section (pervaya tetradka) was to be devoted to news and debates concerning the literary world, as might be expected from the organ of the Writers' Union. It was, however, the second section (vtoraya tetradka) focusing on economic, social and moral issues, as well as foreign affairs, which earned the paper its 'good reputation' and rise in popularity. Circulation jumped from 350,000 to 1 million within a year and is reported to have reached 3 million by the early 1970s.<sup>17</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta was given its facelift under Brezhnev roughly two years after the fall of Khrushchev. By 1967, A. Tvardovskii, the legendary editor-in-chief of the literary journal Novyi mir who succeeded K. Simonov in 1958, had finally come into open conflict with the new leadership. Painfully aware that Soviet society was not yet ready to renounce its Stalinist legacy, Tvardovskii nevertheless bravely carried on fighting his long-standing conservative enemies for another three years until February 1970 when he was forced to resign amidst a campaign of slander against his colleagues and himself.<sup>18</sup> Ironically, Literaturnaya gazeta enjoyed its highest level of popularity and gained its reputation as a 'liberal' publication when Novyi mir was losing its battle and the repressions were forcing an increasing number of intellectuals into illegal dissidence.

Both publications are aimed at roughly the same public. Like Novyi mir, Literaturnaya gazeta is read by the most highly educated section of the Soviet population, the 'specialists' or professionals, a group commonly referred to, in the Soviet context, as the intelligentsia.<sup>19</sup> According to surveys carried out in 1968, nearly 54% of the readership of Literaturnaya gazeta also read Novyi mir, 28.7% on a regular basis, 24.9% from time to time.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the success of both publications, whose raison d'être was originally to deal with literary and artistic issues, was due, to a great extent, to their openly declared commitment to discussing matters directly bearing on the shortcomings of Soviet society. In 1968 only one third of the readership of Literaturnaya gazeta read the paper mainly for the literature or the arts.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, by 1967 many readers of Literaturnaya gazeta had had their awareness shaped by Tvardovskii's Novyi mir and the discussions it generated in the privacy of their homes. A whole generation of readers was familiar with the journal's highly controversial material, ranging from harsh criticisms of socialist realism to accounts of Stalin's terror. The 'collective', including the Party, was already at the time frequently accused of stifling the individual's initiative and creativity. Even the type of criticism which was most welcomed by Khrushchev, that which focused on the socio-economic flaws of the system such as its

overcentralization and the incompetence of officials, was hard-hitting.<sup>22</sup>

That the Soviet intelligentsia should have enjoyed reading the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta after having been exposed to such a high degree of openness in Novyi mir seems to suggest that the paper might have indeed retained a certain degree of subversiveness in spite of the increasingly conservative political climate. It is, indeed, the aim of this study to substantiate and qualify such a claim. However, the relative success of the paper must also be appreciated in relation to the mood of the intelligentsia and its relationship with the political authorities at the time.

A brief summary of this social group's position in the post-Stalin era could read thus: crushed under Stalin, the long silenced intelligentsia was first inspired by the Thaw, only to be disappointed by Khrushchev's half-hearted reforms. It finally became completely demoralized by Brezhnev's conservative rule and repressive methods which intensified in 1968 following the Prague Spring. Therefore it would seem that the job of the new Literaturnaya gazeta was to address a defeated and docile intelligentsia.

This wilfully schematic judgement contains more than a grain of truth. In his book Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power, V. Shlapentokh goes so far as to argue that the 'mass intelligentsia' and most 'intellectuals' 'capitulated' before the repressions directed against the



liberal movement in the seventies. Out of fear for their lives, for their material comfort and careers, professionals either became public supporters of the regime or withdrew into complete passivity, trying to rationalize their political surrender as best they could.<sup>23</sup> Highlighting the pernicious relationship between intellectuals and bureaucrats - but also, perhaps, following a very old Russian tradition whereby the term 'intelligentsia' tends to be reserved for those who oppose the forces of reaction - Shlapentokh frequently refers to professionals holding high-ranking positions under Brezhnev as 'bogus' intellectuals, who owed their success to their political conformism rather than their talents or academic achievements.<sup>24</sup> Collaboration with the authorities, however, meant loss of 'civic prestige'. For instance, Shlapentokh claims that in the seventies Georgii Arbatov, director of the Institute of the USA and Canada, and Aleksandr Chakovskii, editor-in-chief of Literaturnaya gazeta, 'were viewed by the public as bearers of great official prestige, but were barely considered citizens by Soviet intellectuals'.<sup>25</sup> If one did not belong to the minority who bravely continued to oppose the regime openly, silence was best.

Churchward's assessment of the intelligentsia's function in Soviet society since the fifties differs a great deal from that of Shlapentokh. Regarding the sixties as a mere parenthesis, when a small number of 'alienated' intellectuals reasserted the traditional role of the intelligentsia as 'the

conscience of humanity', Churchward stresses the high degree of social and political integration of the mass intelligentsia whose job it is to provide 'specialized leadership under firm party control'. 'Intellectual-apparatchiks' working in local and national government as well as propaganda agencies including the press, have greatly contributed to the 'general process of political legitimisation', assisting the Party in 'its objective of "perfecting" the State and social structure'.<sup>26</sup>

While not ignoring the negative aspects of this close relationship between the intelligentsia and the apparat (censorship, restriction on travel and publication, red tape etc...), Churchward believes in the Party's commitment to the rapid extension of Soviet science and culture, arguing that the intelligentsia is extensively used to give advice on policy matters and that the increasingly blurred distinction between intelligentsia and officialdom has resulted in a higher educational level among the apparatus. Churchward concludes that the vast majority of the intelligentsia is made up of 'careerist professionals', most of them being 'party-minded loyalists', others 'pure careerists' or 'loyal oppositionists', critical of the establishment but broadly supportive of the system and the Party.<sup>27</sup> Churchward does not regard this collaboration between the intelligentsia and political power as a uniquely Soviet phenomenon, arguing that 'the Soviet Union is merely in advance of most countries',

the trend in the West being 'toward the decline of free professionals'.<sup>28</sup>

To a certain extent, Churchward's arguably cynical acceptance of the political integration of the intelligentsia echoes Shlapentokh's pessimistic 'capitulation' theory. There are two essential points, though, on which the two academics differ. While Churchward looks favourably on the collaboration between apparatchiks and professionals, Shlapentokh argues that, as a result of the Party's re-emerging 'deep anti-intellectualism' under Brezhnev, the participation of professionals and academics in decision-making was minimal all through the seventies until Gorbachev came to power.<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that another Soviet analyst, Boris Kagarlitsky, expressed similar views when analysing the technocrats' failure in the seventies to reform the system from within; the laws that govern the bureaucracy, Kagarlitsky argues, are indeed irremediably incompatible with those of technical rationality.<sup>30</sup>

Shlapentokh is also careful not to equate silence and compliance with satisfaction or inner conformism. The outpouring of recriminations that emanated from the intelligentsia in the late eighties, unambiguously showed the limits of this group's political integration during the 'period of stagnation'. Many would agree that even before Gorbachev came to power, there were clear signs that the repressions of the seventies had failed to crush the new sense of identity that the Soviet intelligentsia had acquired

by the end of the Thaw. Spechler argues that one of Novyi mir's lasting achievements had been to contribute to breaking the isolation of intellectuals;<sup>31</sup> and indeed many accounts from Soviet émigrés or Western observers have testified to the fact that what Yu. Glazov calls 'behavioural bilingualism' was commonplace amid the mass intelligentsia of the seventies, criticisms of the regime continuing to be voiced and discussed in private meetings.<sup>32</sup> The material publicized by the literary journal had left an indelible mark on its readers even if not all of them were prepared to face up to the realization that they had consciously or innocently cooperate with an inhumane political regime, even if most of them kept a low profile during the Brezhnev years.<sup>33</sup>

It must also be stressed that a high degree of dissatisfaction could be observed amongst the younger section of the Soviet intelligentsia during the Brezhnev years. As J. R. Millar remarked when commenting upon a series of interviews with Soviet émigrés who left the Soviet Union in the late seventies, it was the younger generation, the most highly socially and politically integrated of all Soviet generations, which was the most likely to be involved in 'unconventional behaviour', ranging from listening to the BBC to distributing samizdat literature.<sup>34</sup>

As these highly educated and socially integrated, yet dissatisfied members of the reading public gave the new Literaturnaya gazeta a good reception, at least in the early seventies, it is reasonable to assume that the paper must

have expressed a number of their concerns and aspirations. Shlapentokh, who directed a survey of the paper's readers and who himself occasionally contributed to it when still working in the Soviet Union, seems indeed to have shared this view: 'More so than any other periodical', he once wrote, 'Literaturnaya gazeta reflects the mood and views of Soviet intellectuals'.<sup>35</sup>

Which of these views did the paper choose to take on board during the period of reaction following the Thaw? To what extent did it contribute to defending the liberal ideas of the sixties? Even if the paper's function was only to articulate a certain amount of loyal opposition before a mass audience of highly educated professionals, how 'loyal' was this opposition? What role did Literaturnaya gazeta play, if any, in the debunking of official dogmas? It is hoped that a close analysis of the paper's content over a period of five years will help to find some answers to these questions.

#### Methodology and Focus of the Study

This study deals exclusively with the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta, the literary paper owing its rising popularity in the late sixties and early seventies to these newly introduced eight pages that focus on economic, social and moral issues as well as international events.<sup>36</sup> However, a close examination of the paper's first twenty-six issues in the year 1967, when the new format was introduced (from 4/1/67 to 28/6/67), showed that a wide range of subjects

were discussed in the second section and that, consequently, a detailed analysis of its content would necessitate a further selection of the material.<sup>37</sup>

First of all, it was decided to leave aside the foreign affairs section. A study of the paper's readership, conducted in the Soviet Union in 1973, had shown that this section enjoyed a high level of popularity, though not to the same extent as articles on domestic issues which were read on a regular basis by 96% of subscribers.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, however, a cursory reading of this section confirmed the observation frequently made by Soviet and Western observers that foreign coverage remained conventional after 1967. It has even been argued that Literaturnaya gazeta 'served as the Central Committee's international slander column' and that some of the material in the 'international life' section is likely to have originated directly from the Central Committee or the KGB rather than the paper's offices.<sup>39</sup>

A systematic reading of the second section (minus foreign affairs) over the period 1967-71, revealed that the most abundantly covered subjects were economics, including both industrial and agricultural issues, and the services (byt), including housing problems. Then came the 'woman question' and family relations, legal matters, moral issues, and the protection of the environment (both natural and cultural). By comparison, questions pertaining to the educational, academic and professional world received less

attention, and only a few articles were published on the young and the health service.<sup>40</sup>

It soon became apparent, however, that it was not necessarily the most generously covered areas which produced the most interesting copy. For example, many of the articles on economic issues are rather dull, which might account, at least partly, for the fact that they rank quite low on the popularity chart established by Fomicheva and her team.<sup>41</sup> By 1967, the disappointment caused by the half-hearted economic reforms introduced in 1965 was already making itself felt, and bold advocacies of market socialism were no longer welcome in the official press.<sup>42</sup> The debates on agriculture display a greater degree of polarization, in particular on the question of rural housing; Gosstroï (the planning authorities for construction) is fiercely criticized for neglecting old villages and for building blocks of flats in rural areas that only alienate farmers from the land even further.<sup>43</sup> Yet the more muted debates on other aspects of the agricultural question also suggest that the heyday of reform-minded economists was indeed over.

On the other hand, the debate on women's double burden, which also takes up a substantial amount of space, contains some of the liveliest controversy to be found in the paper. Pro-natalist articles by male demographers, like V. Perevedentsev, who believed that women should be encouraged to stay at home in order to look after their young children, were challenged by women sociologists, in particular Larisa

Kuznetsova, who argued for a better trained female workforce and better services.<sup>44</sup> An article by B. Uralis urging women to 'take care of men' triggered off a flow of angry letters from women readers as well as a series of articles permeated with very strong feminist sentiments.<sup>45</sup> As to the numerous articles attacking Gosplan and industrial managers for destroying the natural environment, in particular forests, rivers and Lake Baikal, they reveal a deep awareness, albeit restrained in expression, of the seriousness of the country's ecological problems.

The debates on the 'woman question' and the environment certainly deserve a great deal of attention, not least because they are reported to have greatly contributed to the high popularity of the paper. According to the above-mentioned readership study, the articles read on a regular basis by the largest proportion of readers (88%) tackled issues concerning the individual's 'private life', marriage, the family and the role of men and women within the family and society; the section of the paper concerned with environmental issues was also a favourite, ranking third among the most popular subject areas on 'domestic life'.<sup>46</sup> However, like the more subdued economic controversies, these outspoken debates do not best illustrate what emerges as a leitmotif throughout the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta between 1967 and 1971, namely the oppressive nature of Soviet society and the slow reawakening of the individual. This recurrent theme, which dominates a number of debates,



some more lively than others, challenges the very essence of Soviet society as defined in officially promoted collectivist dogmas and, therefore, will be the focus of this study.

The study is divided into four parts and ten chapters.

Part I, which includes chapters 1 and 2, examines the composition of the editorial board and the circumstances in which the new format was launched.

Part II focuses on the relationship between the individual and the collective. The articles examined in chapter 3 are concerned with the decline in morals and the degradation of human and social relations in everyday situations. Chapter 4 is based on pieces written mostly by academics who explicitly challenge the very theory of collectivism. Finally, chapter 5 discusses the contributions which highlight the population's alienation from officially sanctioned collectives and the search for new forms of social relations.

Part III examines the large amount of material dealing with the Soviet population's living standards, which highlights the consequences of an ideology denying individuals their consumer rights. While chapter 6 analyses the debates generated by the emergence of 'materialistic tendencies' in Soviet society, chapter 7 assesses the value of the much less controversial, yet fiercely voiced criticisms of incompetently managed public services. Chapter 8 focuses on the contributions which reveal a growth of consumer awareness in Soviet public opinion.

Part IV tackles the debates on Soviet law that emphasize the vulnerability of the individual caught up in the judicial system. Chapter 9 examines articles which question the backwardness of Soviet criminology, the extreme harshness of the law and society's rejection of former offenders. Chapter 10 concentrates on the contributions which question the very nature of the criminal procedure, including the excessive powers of the procuracy.

Although these subject areas roughly coincide with specific sections, there has been no attempt to organize the material in the same way as it is presented in the paper. For instance, while Literaturnaya gazeta has a section called 'The Individual, the Collective and Society', many of the articles examined in part II, which is entitled 'The Individual and the Collective', appeared under various headings such as 'Life and Mores', 'Private Life', 'Ethics', or 'Pedagogy'. The need to reorganize the material was also prompted by a degree of overlap between sections. For example, legal and economic problems are occasionally raised in the section on 'ethics', and the services can be discussed either in the economics or the 'byt page'. Furthermore, a substantial amount of articles are published under general headings such as 'Various Themes' or 'Writers and Life'.

Finally, it must be pointed out that there is no correlation between the length of a debate and the amount of attention it receives. A number of short, yet outspoken controversies, or even isolated contributions, are more

effective than longer debates in disclosing the shifts in ideas, values and expectations that jeopardize the official dogmas. The relative length and openness of the debates are also indicative of the paper's varying degree of commitment to nonconformist views.

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11. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR, Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1982, p.iii.

12. Ibid. pp.ix-xii.

13. Ibid. p.116.

14. Ibid. p.60 and p.129.

15. R. Rogers, op. cit. p.67.

16. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, op. cit. p.viii.

17. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, op. cit. p.115.

18. D. R. Spechler, op. cit. pp.217-27; In his memoir, The Oak and the Calf, Solzhenitsyn gives us some insight into Tvardovskii's inner conflicts during the last years of his life. Deeply shaken by the revelations of the XX Party Congress, Tvardovskii tried for many years to cling to his faith in Marxism-Leninism. Angered by his undemocratic management of Novyi mir and his willingness to compromise with the authorities, Solzhenitsyn was nevertheless fond of him. He was greatly encouraged to hear that Tvardovskii had taken up reading samizdat literature and had had time to read The Gulag Archipelago before he died in July 1971; see A. I. Solzhenitsyn, The Oak and the Calf - A Memoir, London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1980.

19. The term 'intelligentsia' can be confusing. According to the Stalinist tripartite division of Soviet society, this social 'stratum' includes anyone engaged in 'mental' work whatever the level of qualification required; the term is, however, often understood to refer to the educated section of the middle classes; Shlyapentokh's analysis of the readership of Literaturnaya gazeta has shown that the paper, is, indeed, read by a highly educated public: 72.3% of readers had received incomplete or complete higher education. Only 4.7% had received incomplete secondary or primary education; see F. M. Burlatskii, ed., Chitatel' i gazeta, Informatsionnyi byulleten', No.21(36), Institut konkretnykh sotsial'nykh issledovaniy AN SSSR, Moscow, 1969.

20. Ibid. p.155.

21. Ibid. p.148.

22. See Spechler, op. cit., for the different types of criticism to be found in Novyi mir during the Thaw.

23. V. Shlapentokh, Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power, London: I B Tauris & Co, 1990, pp.180-1; Shlapentokh sees the support given to the Russophile ideology by a section of the intelligentsia in the seventies as a way of maintaining some sort of opposition to the regime without risking repression.

24. See, for example, ibid. pp.13, 26 and 54; B. Kargalitsky too associates the 'true' intelligentsia with political radicalism, arguing, for example, that 'by their action the contributors to Vekhi had put themselves outside the ranks of the Russian intelligentsia'; The Thinking Reed:

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27. Ibid. pp.123 and 136.

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29. Shlapentokh, op. cit. pp.21-6.

30. Kagarlitsky, op. cit. pp.256-69.

31. Spechler, op. cit. p.247.

32. Yu. Glazov, The Russian Mind Since Stalin's Death, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Corporation, 1985, p.74.

33. Viktor Nekrasov's famous heroine Kira Georgievna, who realizes that her life has been built on the suppression of guilt when her husband returns after several years in labour camp and exile, is a perfect embodiment of the tragedy of this generation; Kira Geogievna, Cambridge: CUP, 1967. See also Raisa Orlova, who in her memoirs stresses how traumatic it was for herself and thousands of communists who had been devoted to the Party and inspired since childhood by a sense of mission, to admit the truth; Vospominaniya o neproshedshem vremeni, Michigan: Ardis publishers, 1983.

34. J. R. Millar, 'History, Method and the Problem of Bias' in J. R. Millar, ed., Politics, Work and Daily Life in the USSR, Cambridge: CUP, 1987, p.28; see also J. R. Millar and P. Donhowe, 'Life, Work and Politics in Soviet Cities: First Findings of the Soviet Interview Project', Problems of Communism, January-February 1987, p.53.

35. Shlapentokh, op. cit. p.xiii.

36. In his memoirs, the former Soviet journalist V. Perel'man mischievously remarks that 'the first section was done for the benefit of the Central Committee while the second section was intended for the readers'; see V. Perel'man, Pokinutaya Rossiya, Volume 2, 'Krushenie', Tel Aviv: Vremya: my, 1976, p.157.

37. See appendix 1.

38. See appendix 2.

39. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, op. cit. p.128.

40. See appendix 4.

41. See appendix 3.

42. On the economic debates of the 1960s see M. Lewin, Stalinism and the Seeds of Soviet Reform, London: Pluto Press, 1991; especially the section entitled 'The Renaissance of Economics', pp.134-47.

43. The debate is triggered off by N. Chetunova, 'Dom v derevne - Kakim emu byt'', LG, 1967, No.35, pp.10-11; her criticisms of the official policy are shared in particular by the 'rural' writer Boris Mozhaev; see his article 'Gde komu zhit'', LG, 1968, No.8, p.10.

44. There are several articles by these two authors; see, in particular, L. Kuznetsova, 'Nosha ne po plechu', LG, 1967, No.7, p.11 and V. Perevedentsev, 'Skol'ko imet' detei?', LG, 1968, No.47, p.12.

45. B. Urlanis, 'Beregite muzhchin!', LG, 1968, No.31, p.12; amongst the replies see, in particular, Larisa Kryachko, 'Sil'nyi pol vzyvaet k miloserdiyu?', LG, 1968, No.33, p.12; Ada Baskina, 'I zhenshchin beregite?', LG, 1968, No.36, p.11; and Natal'ya Baranskaya, 'Muzhchiny, beregite zhenshchin!', LG, 1971, No.46, p.13, which also discusses issues raised by readers about her story 'Nedelya kak nedelya', which was published in Novy mir (No.11) in 1969; see also 'Svoboda dlya kukhni?', LG, 1967, No.8, p.12, by L. Libedinskaya, who fiercely attacks the writer Edvard Shim for wanting to keep women in the home; and G. Gerasimov's article, 'Radi zdorov'ya zhenshchiny', LG, 1967, No.2, p.12, published in the 'science' section, in which he describes, in some detail and in very positive terms, the different types of female contraception available in the USA, harshly criticizes the anti-contraception lobby in the West and calls for a wide debate on the question in the USSR; the article is very outspoken, yet was not further discussed.

46. The second most popular theme is rather vaguely defined as 'the future of man and mankind'; see appendix 3.

## PART ONE

### THE NEW FORMAT

#### I. THE EDITORIAL BOARD

##### 1. The Editor-in-Chief

When the first issue of the new format Literaturnaya gazeta was published on 4 January 1967, A. Chakovskii had already been its editor-in-chief for four years. (The issue of 27 December 1962 was the first one to be published under its editorship.) This fact alone might suggest that no great change was to be expected in the tone of the paper, or at least that the mentors of the Party considered Chakovskii as perfectly well qualified to carry out the new task they had in mind for the organ of the Writers' Union. The new job was, in fact, entrusted to the man who owed his appointment to a successful conservative attack on the 'liberals' of the literary world at the end of 1962.

Indeed, during the Khrushchev Thaw, Literaturnaya gazeta made an attempt to elude the stifling authority of the all-powerful Union of Writers, whose political conformism has been abundantly documented.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the paper had remained the mouthpiece of the literary establishment up until the



death of Stalin, subserviently and relentlessly publicizing the hysterical attacks launched by Zhdanov and his acolytes on the literary world. In his study of the anti-West witch-hunt of 1946-48, G. Struve relates how Literaturnaya gazeta 'easily broke all the records' when it came to denouncing various manifestations of 'cosmopolitanism'.<sup>2</sup> When Zhdanov died in 1948, the paper published a tribute to him entitled 'A friend of Soviet writers'.<sup>3</sup>

In the early sixties, Literaturnaya gazeta, which was then under the editorship of V.A. Kosolapov (from 15/12/60 to 25/12/62), was commonly perceived as belonging to the 'liberal camp' together with Novyi mir, even though its 'liberalism' was considerably less outspoken and enterprising than that of the literary journal. The conservative camp was represented by the executive board of the Writers' Union of the RSFSR, assisted by the magazine Oktyabr and the newspaper Literatura i zhizn.<sup>4</sup> Amidst the continuous fighting which was characteristic of the Khrushchev Thaw, the 'liberals' eventually lost the battle for the editorship of Literaturnaya gazeta when in December 1962 Kosolapov was replaced by Chakovskii at the head of the paper. The last straw seems to have been Kosolapov's decision to publish Evtushenko's poem, Bab'ii yar, which contained an unmistakable acknowledgement and denunciation of Soviet anti-Semitism. Chakovskii was to remain chief-editor of Literaturnaya gazeta for twenty-six years until December 1988 when he was replaced by Yu. P. Voronov, a keen supporter of perestroika.<sup>5</sup>

In his study of the political aspect of the Soviet literary scene in the sixties, P. Benno writes that Kosolapov was replaced by Chakovskii, 'a former NKVD agent'.<sup>6</sup> While it would be unreasonable to expect any confirmation or denial of such a piece of information from the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, it is interesting to look at the entry (two thirds of a column) it devotes to this obviously well established writer, if only to compare it with that of Tvardovskii. The Encyclopedia's board of editors obviously decided that the former editor-in-chief of Novyi mir, who had been ruthlessly removed from the official literary scene, deserved, after all, a longer article (two and a half columns) which would unequivocally praise his literary talent and contribution to Soviet literature.

The article on Chakovskii is a more sober account of his numerous achievements as a writer and editor, for which he has been generously rewarded throughout his life. His career as a 'kul'turnyi deyatel'' (literary functionary) began in the fateful year of 1937 when he was invited to join the team of Oktyabr' at the early age of twenty-three. Since then his career seems to have progressed without hindrance. He was appointed to the editorial board of Znamya after the war and finally reached the top at the age of forty-two when, in 1955, he became editor-in-chief of the literary journal Inostrannaya literatura. This appointment was indicative of the trust invested in him by the political and literary establishment. He was to be one of the 'happy few' whose role

in deciding what might be shown to the general public gave him unrestricted and legitimate access to Western literature.

Chakovskii's literary career has also been very successful. An outspoken supporter of socialist realism and the idea of the writer as an active propagandist of the Party line, Chakovskii has written extensively about the Great Patriotic War. When appointed editor-in-chief of Literaturnaya gazeta, he was engaged in writing his lengthy novel, Blokada, on the siege of Leningrad, for which he was awarded the Lenin Prize in 1978.<sup>7</sup> He also demonstrated his ability to attune himself to the leadership's preoccupations by writing about the young technical intelligentsia, precisely the audience at which the new Literaturnaya gazeta was to be aimed.<sup>8</sup> Needless to say, the success of Chakovskii's literary career must be appreciated in the context of the Soviet literary establishment. His Stalinist prose and bombastic style have not been to everyone's liking, as shown by the following assessment of his fiction by literary critic D. Rzhevsky:

The second trend in present-day Soviet literature is represented by the programmatic writers - notably by those who write for Oktyabr' (e.g., Panfyorov, ... and Chakovskii) and many others who in practice support the theory that their craft should be an 'aide of the Party' and back this belief by adhering to the vocabulary and didactic principles of socialist realism.

The predominant trait of these authors....., is, I would say, virtual disregard of the word as a creative end in itself ..... In the works of the programmatic writers the pictorial

function of the word yields to what must be called the communicative function. Meaningful description is replaced by empty decorative, creative inventiveness and stylistic individuality by rhetoric and stiltedness.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, Chakovskii's portrait would be incomplete, and to some extent incomprehensible within the Soviet context, if one did not mention his high social and political responsibilities. A member of the Party since the age of twenty-eight, secretary of the board of the Writers' Union since 1962, deputy of the Supreme Soviet, candidate member of the CC since 1971, Chakovskii has obviously been a loyal servant of the Party. Not only has he been awarded several prestigious prizes and decorations, but his frequent trips abroad are evidence of his high socio-political status. The Soviet Biographic Archive contains more than a dozen references to his participation in various Soviet delegations to the West (including the USA) between 1973 and 1985. He made most of these trips in his capacity as a political, rather than a literary, activist. He has also frequently been a member of delegations meeting Western politicians in Moscow. His role as an occasional spokesman of the Soviet Union abroad seems to date back to the mid-sixties. It is mentioned in Izvestiya of 3 February 1965 (p.2) that he was interviewed by the New York Times magazine. In 1977 Literaturnaya Gazeta (No.7, p.3) reports that during his trip to Italy with the paper's first deputy editor, V.

Syrokomskii, Chakovskii spoke on Italian radio and television.

All would seem to indicate that Chakovskii fits perfectly well the description of the typical high-ranking official of the Brezhnev era. Trained under Stalin, he overtly helped to implement some of Zhdanov's most outrageous policies. In her memoirs, R. Orlova relates how friends tried to dissuade her from accepting a post on the editorial board of Inostrannaya literatura because its editor-in-chief, A. Chakovskii, was famous for his intransigent attitude during the officially launched campaign against 'cosmopolitanism'.<sup>10</sup>

In the late sixties Chakovskii published two overtly didactic novels, God zhizni (1957), and its sequel, Dorogi, kotorye my vybiraem (1960), which give us an insight into their author's post-Stalin conservative views. The second volume, in particular, shows Chakovskii's reluctance to interpret the XX Congress of the CPSU as an event which could jeopardize what he sees as the fundamentally sound continuity of the Soviet system. While not disputing the need to denounce 'Stalin's mistakes', he chose to promote the Congress as evidence of the Party's strength and of the country's determination to carry on the building of communism. Providing that one works hard and one has the courage to fight negative elements, namely parasites, careerists, demagogues, as well as the half-hearted, inside and outside the Party, the old dream cannot fail to come true.<sup>11</sup>

All through the sixties Chakovskii continued to show his support for the conservatives publicly by taking an active part in the campaign waged against Novyi mir and those who were being gradually forced into dissidence. From 1963 to 1969 when Solzhenitsyn was finally expelled from the Writers' Union, Literaturnaya gazeta fiercely attacked both the writer and the literary journal which published some of his works.

The two publications became enemies as soon as Chakovskii took over from Kosolapov. Their differences of opinion became particularly acute at the end of 1963 when they crystallized into a heated public disagreement about the value of Solzhenitsyn's works. On 19 October 1963 the editorial of Literaturnaya gazeta made it clear that the paper agreed entirely with Yu. Barabash's criticism of Solzhenitsyn's short story, For the Good of the Cause. Novyi mir replied by publishing three letters from readers who were all unquestioning supporters of the writer. In its issue of 12 December 1963 Literaturnaya gazeta interpreted Novyi mir's reaction as evidence of its bias.<sup>12</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta's hostility towards Novyi mir and the ideological current it represented, repeatedly manifested itself until the ousting of Tvardovskii in 1970. It was evident that the paper had resumed its role as a mouthpiece of the establishment, which it had briefly forsaken under Kosolapov, and that it was playing a decisive role in bringing Tvardovskii down. Izvestiya of 30 March 1967 (p.5) reported a meeting held by the secretariat of the Writers'

Union 'devoted to a discussion of the activities of Novyi mir for the past few years'. The session began with a contribution by Tvardovskii, who, judging by the wording of the article, had to respond to harsh criticism about the 'ideological and artistic errors and shortcomings' of the journal. Chakovskii's name was mentioned in the list of the participants, together with two colleagues on the editorial board, L. Novichenko and G. Markov.<sup>13</sup>

After the 'liberals' of Novyi mir had been defeated, Literaturnaya gazeta could concentrate on discrediting individual dissidents. The issue of 26 June 1968 contained a lengthy anonymous article entitled 'The ideological struggle - The writer's responsibility', in which Solzhenitsyn's First Circle was scathingly criticized for being a 'malicious slander on the Soviet system', and its author called a 'traitor'. Numerous articles in the same vein were to be published in Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>14</sup>

D. Burg and G. Feifer have described Chakovskii as 'a highly intelligent and articulate conservative' who 'was emerging as one of Solzhenitsyn's most determined and enduring foes.'<sup>15</sup> However, it would be wrong to assume that the determination with which Chakovskii attacked Solzhenitsyn stemmed from personal hatred alone. There is no doubt that his stand was a political one. Chakovskii's denunciation of political dissidents has been consistent, whatever the degree of their dissidence. Yu. Glazov reminds us that Chakovskii, 'a close associate of Andropov' contributed to the campaign

against Sakharov by publishing, in 1973, an article in Literaturnaya gazeta in which the scientist was portrayed as a 'religious fool'.<sup>16</sup>

There is evidence that the man Solzhenitsyn described in his memoirs as 'nimble', 'keen-scented' and 'venomous', was disliked by many of his peers. He was among the writers who were attacked by name for their participation in campaigns of abuse against fellow writers during a Party meeting which took place a few days after the XX Party Congress.<sup>17</sup> More than thirty years later, the literary critic Yu. G. Burtin would accuse him in public of being one of the numerous timeservers who in the mid-sixties were instrumental in bringing about 'the move from democratization to neo-Stalinism and stagnation'.<sup>18</sup> Commenting upon Voronov's appointment as chief-editor of Literaturnaya gazeta in 1988, Wishnevsky remarks that 'few writers in the Soviet Union have as negative a reputation as does Aleksandr Chakovsky', who, she continues, 'is regarded by the intellectual community as both a bad writer and a bad person'.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Significance of Chakovskii's Appointment as Editor-in-Chief

There is no doubt that the transformation of Literaturnaya gazeta took place under the aegis of a conservative editor-in-chief. Chakovskii's political loyalties should certainly make us cautious about uncritically accepting the reputation of the paper as being



'liberal' or 'progressive' in comparison with other Soviet publications.

In fact, one wonders to what extent it is relevant at this stage to use such terms in order to assess the specificity of Literaturnaya gazeta. The word 'liberal' conveys very different meanings when applied to Western or East European societies, and, to make matters worse, tends to be used indiscriminately to describe any supporters of the Thaw under Khrushchev. What exactly is meant by 'liberalism'? Would it be more appropriate to speak of 'openness'? Would it be the case that Chakovskii could afford to welcome some degree of 'openness' now that the 'liberals' had been defeated?

Obviously, these questions cannot be adequately answered prior to a close analysis of the paper's contents. But some suggestions can already be made as to why the second section was perceived by many as a new, more 'liberal' departure in Soviet journalism in spite of the conservatism of its chief-editor.

It could be argued that the creation of the new section represented a novel venture inasmuch as official statements and speeches and straightforward propaganda had given way to sophisticated discussions of social and economic issues usually found in the specialized 'thick' journals. By adopting this more subtle approach, the paper broke fresh ground and encouraged the intelligentsia in its belief that

the ousting of Khrushchev had not meant a complete retreat into the past.

While it would be wrong to underestimate the importance of such a change, not least because, as a result, the paper became more readable, one must nevertheless be careful not to confuse form and content and always keep in mind that the degree of openness can be adequately measured only after it has been established what issues have been discussed, how and by whom.

In fact, a cynical view would be to argue that the creation of the second section was nothing more than the implementation of the Soviet leadership's long-standing policy of using the press as a tool for propaganda capable of reaching all strata of society by addressing each of them in an appropriate language. The question of the differentiation in the structure of the press had been raised as early as the twenties. Several references to it can be found in Lenin's writings, and the principles of the diversification of the press were laid down in 1923 at the XII Party Congress.<sup>20</sup>

The Soviet press under Stalin has not been the object of extensive research. Yet the view, commonly held among Soviet propagandists and journalists in the sixties, that it is wrong to assume that there is such a thing as an 'average reader', suggests that the XII Congress's resolutions had not led to a great deal of 'differentiation'.<sup>21</sup> The uniformity of the press which, according to some scholars, persisted for nearly four decades, seems to have resulted from the

obsessive need, characteristic of any dictatorship, to control everything and everyone. A. Buzek argues that under Stalin not only did the Party use to impose the same content and journalistic approach on all newspapers in broad terms, it also intervened in the technical details of editing, layout and so on.<sup>22</sup>

With the political relaxation of the late fifties, however, it was possible again to put the issue of diversification on the agenda. The position of the intelligentsia had become much stronger as a result of its growing numbers and the need for professional expertise in an increasingly sophisticated Soviet society. Its active, sometimes restive, contribution to the process of de-Stalinisation during the Thaw had certainly been indicative of its thirst for more information and debates. It was time to address the intelligentsia in its own language. In this respect, the new format of Literaturnaya gazeta can indeed be regarded as a mere application of the old principle of diversification. Chakovskii's job was to involve the intelligentsia in carefully controlled debates about the state of the country in order to facilitate its political integration.

There is still a case for arguing, however, that the new format could be the beginning of a more 'liberal' venture inasmuch as it was also a conscious departure from a completely monolithic presentation of the establishment. Chakovskii is said to have been told by one of Brezhnev's

close associates that Literaturnaya gazeta was an 'unusual newspaper', 'like a sort of socialist Hyde Park'. This is how Chakovskii is believed to have understood this remark:

... the leadership saw Literaturnaya Gazeta as a medium through which a wide range of establishment opinions could be voiced without committing the leaders to an official position. The importance of this role of Literaturnaya Gazeta was to make the reader aware that the Party recognized that certain problems were important, that it was thinking about them and encouraging others to do so as well - in short to demonstrate to intellectuals that the Party was on the job.<sup>23</sup>

This arguably cynical conception of the paper's function would account for both the limits of its outspokenness and the wide scope of debate to be found in its pages. Only establishment opinions would be allowed to be voiced, yet a certain degree of plurality was acknowledged, which in the end could be instrumental in giving professionals a better understanding of the complexities and shortcomings of their society.

The appointment of Chakovskii as editor-in-chief of Literaturnaya gazeta undoubtedly meant that the paper was to remain loyal to the conservative leadership of Brezhnev. Hence, in particular, the attacks on dissidence. However, a total condemnation of political dissent does not necessarily imply a refusal to discuss domestic problems, which is precisely the area in which the paper enjoyed a reputation for a certain degree of openness in the late sixties and early seventies.

Finally, while Chakovskii was directly answerable to the political leadership for the content of Literaturnaya gazeta, the everyday running of the paper was not controlled by himself but by a small team of editors. What little information is available on them might give some more insight into the development of the paper.

### 3. The Board of Editors

Between the end of 1962 when Chakovskii took over from Kosolapov and the beginning of 1967 when the new format was launched, the editorial board of Literaturnaya gazeta underwent great changes.<sup>24</sup> Only four members of the board (Guliya, Medvedev, Prudkov and Terteryan) stayed on. Without additional information it is difficult to surmise why as many as two thirds of the previous team (11 out of 15) left. Was it Chakovskii's conscious decision to achieve a radical reshuffle of the board, whether for political or professional reasons, in view of the new type of paper Literaturnaya gazeta was to become? Or would it have happened even if the paper had not been drastically transformed, merely as a result of the appointment of a new boss? And there is also the possibility that some of these people did not really mind relinquishing this job in order to go on to better things without necessarily severing all links with the paper; it might have been the case, in particular, of well established writers such as Bondarev, Leont'ev or Soloukhin. Yu. Ya. Barabash, deputy editor together with Terteryan under

Kosolapov, was obviously heading for more prestigious positions. He eventually became director of the Institute of International Literature of the USSR Academy of Sciences and later was appointed first deputy minister of culture (1977-1984).<sup>25</sup>

While the reasons for such a drastic change of personnel remain undocumented, it is undeniable that the new format was the work of a largely new team. Its gradual formation over four years was finally completed by January 1967 in time for the launch of the new format and changed very little over the next ten years. At the end of 1977, eleven of the nineteen members of the original team were still on the board, which was headed by the same small group of top editors. Of the eight persons whose names had disappeared from the list of editors by the end of 1977, three had died. So, in fact, only five out of the nineteen editors decided, or were asked, to leave the paper.

Although considerations of a strictly professional nature should not be overlooked, one cannot help noticing that such a degree of stability in the composition of the editorial board, following the upheaval of the mid-sixties, conspicuously reflects what happened on the political scene. The Brezhnev administration is, indeed, well known for its low turnover of political personnel.

There were also some elements of continuity in the team of 1967, which should not be altogether disregarded. It is, though, difficult to assess whether the four editors who

survived the reshuffle represented a link, however tenuous, with the 'liberals' of the fifties and sixties or with their conservative opponents.

All of them were still on the board in 1977 with the exception of V.S. Medvedev who died in 1970. Whereas little is known about the precise function and influence of G.D. Guliya, an Abkhazian writer who was awarded a decoration for his work for Literaturnaya gazeta in 1979, there is no doubt about Prudkov's and Terteryan's high status. O. N. Prudkov was responsible for the international section and was also the secretary of the paper's Party committee.<sup>26</sup> A.S. Terteryan, who was already fifty nine in 1967, retained the post of deputy editor he already held under Kosolapov; however, he was not promoted to the position of 'first deputy editor' which was created in 1967 and entrusted to V.A. Syrokonskii, a newcomer to Literaturnaya gazeta. Terteryan was believed to have been a high-ranking military censor, and as the editor in charge of the domestic affairs section, had the reputation of being 'less strict' than E. A. Krivitskii, the newly recruited deputy editor in charge of literature.<sup>27</sup>

This is yet another reminder that whether Literaturnaya gazeta was just an establishment paper with pretensions to openness or was genuinely committed to openness in spite of conservative pressure, a newspaper that could accommodate old stagers like Terteryan could not be such a ground-breaking venture after all.

The most important changes in the composition of the editorial board took place in the second half of 1966. The four new members - V. A. Syrokonskii, E. A. Krivitskii, V. A. Gorbunov and A. I. Smirnov-Cherkezov - were all to fulfil important functions or exert a decisive influence on the development of the paper. The timing of their appointments seems to indicate that they had been selected to do just that.

Vitalii Aleksandrovich Syrokonskii was only thirty-four when appointed first deputy editor, a position which in practice, when it comes to the actual running of the paper, made him the boss. But he had already gained a great deal of experience and recognition as a journalist. A graduate of the notoriously prestigious Institute of International Relations (IMO), he had worked in the Moscow Party city committee and held the position of editor-in-chief of Moscow's evening newspaper, Vechernyaya Moskva.<sup>28</sup> V. Perel'man portrays him as an enthusiastic innovator committed to the new image of Literaturnaya gazeta and appreciative of talented journalists, yet inclined to manage his team in a rather autocratic manner. Journalists were selected on the basis of a 'competition' ('po konkursu'), a practice which was then unheard of in Soviet journalism, but the turnover was high.<sup>29</sup>

Evgenii Alekseevich Krivitskii was born in 1929, graduated at the philological department of Leningrad State University in 1951 and worked for the regional newspaper Stalingradskaya pravda from 1951 to 1958. He then continued



his education at the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the CC of the CPSU and completed a 'kandidat' thesis in philological sciences.<sup>30</sup> His qualifications both in the humanities and politics had probably made him an ideal candidate for the post of 'instruktor' at the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee which he held before joining the editorial board and where one of his functions was to supervise Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>31</sup> For this reason, his appointment could be regarded, to some extent, as yet another element of continuity.<sup>32</sup>

Syrokonskii and Krivitskii shared common features. Both were highly educated successful professionals who had held high-ranking positions at a relatively young age. Neither of them had been trained to be a journalist, but this was not at all untypical in the Soviet Union. M. Hopkins pointed out that schools of journalism had difficulty attracting students, and in 1966 the majority of editors lacked a formal journalistic education.<sup>33</sup> However, both editors had the qualities and experience required to lay claim to the job in so far as they were broadly educated people committed to the idea of propagandist journalism and already in close contact with politicians. Furthermore, both of them had previously practical experience of newspaper editing.

Valerii Arkad'evich Gorbunov also shared some of these characteristics. He was thirty-nine when he was appointed first secretary (otvetstvennyi sekretar'). His name first appeared in the list of editors on 6 October 1966, and his

title was specified on the first issue of the new format. It is not clear, however, what his function entailed, and he seems to have been the only one among the managing team to have divided his career between writing and journalism. In a short tribute to him on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, he was praised for having concentrated in his writing on the theme of work and the young worker and helped to publicize 'the achievements of Soviet literature' and the 'socialist way of life'.<sup>34</sup>

Although these three men showed every sign of being socially and politically well integrated, their relatively young age - mid and late thirties - set them apart from Chakovskii. They belonged to a younger generation which received its professional training in the fifties at a time when the need for some change was publicly acknowledged. They were more likely to push for greater openness.

Aleksandr Ivanovich Smirnov-Cherkezov, who also joined the board of editors in 1966, belonged to the same generation as Chakovskii, but had a very different personal history. Born in 1909, he began his working life as a construction engineer, a trade which he would later use as a springboard for entering the world of journalism. Indeed, he worked as a correspondent for the specialized newspaper Stroitel'naya gazeta from 1954 to 1957. He also was a writer of popular science and fiction.<sup>35</sup>

Not only had Smirnov-Cherkezov gained work experience outside the realm of academia and journalism, unlike

Chakovskii, but as a political prisoner in labour camps until Stalin's death, he had also gained first hand knowledge of the most sinister aspects of Stalinism.<sup>36</sup>

Although Smirnov-Cherkezov did not officially hold any managing position on the board, he is believed to have been directly responsible for the second section together with the first deputy editor, Syrokonskii. Both men had the reputation of being committed to a more daring approach to journalism. Judging by the accounts given by former Soviet journalists, Smirnov-Cherkezov was not afraid of speaking up and supporting new initiatives from below.<sup>37</sup> He stayed with the paper for five years until August 1971, a little more than a year before his death, which was announced in Literaturnaya gazeta of 22/11/72.

So, the team of top editors in charge of the second section showed both signs of conformism and some potential for open-mindedness. On the one hand, as might have been expected, they were all men (between 1967 and 1977 only one woman, L. Pankina, was on the editorial board for one year only); two of them, Syrokonskii and Terteryan, were highly integrated into the socio-political fabric and in close contact with politicians, with Terteryan possibly representing, for some, a reassuring link with the past.

On the other hand, Terteryan did not have the reputation of being stubbornly conservative; Syrokonskii's youth made him more likely to welcome some degree of change and Smirnov-Cherkezov's past was unlikely to encourage complacency.

Finally, none of them seemed to have vested interests in the implacably conservative Union of Writers, unlike Chakovskii and some of their colleagues in the literary section.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See, in particular, John and Carol Garrard, Inside the Soviet Writers' Union, London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1990.
2. G. Struve, Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin (1917-1953), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p.361.
3. Ibid. p.395.
4. V. Alexandrova, A History of Soviet Literature (1917-1964) : From Gorky to Solzhenitsyn, New York: Anchor Books, 1964, p.409.
5. See LG, 14 December 1988, No.50, p.1; and J. Wishnevsky, 'Voronov Replaces Chakovsky as Editor of *Literaturnaya gazeta*', Radio Liberty Report on the USSR, 6 January 1989, pp.6-8: strangely enough, Chakovskii's departure had been demanded by the conservative journal *Molodaya gvardiya* and a number of anti-Semite writers. Yet he was replaced by a liberal, Yurii Voronov, who was soon to be succeeded by F. Burlatskii. (Chakovskii himself and several members of his staff were Jews. Ilya Suslov, who worked as editor of the LG humour column, page 16, before he emigrated to the USA, remarked that the assistant editor-in-chief made sure there were not too many Jewish names in the paper, and that all the Jewish authors who contributed to his column wrote under pseudonyms; see I. Suslov, 'Censoring the Journalist' in M. Tax Choldin and M. Friedberg, The Red Pencil - Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p.151.)
6. P. Benno in M. Hayward and E. L. Crowley, eds., Soviet Literature in the Sixties, London: Methuen & Co. 1965, p.198.
7. In his memoirs, the former Soviet journalist Viktor Perel'man, who worked for LG from 1968 to 1972, remarks that the 'real' boss was, in fact, the paper's first deputy editor, V. A. Syrokonskii, as Chakovskii spent his time writing *Blokada* in his country house ('na dache'); see V. Perel'man, Pokinutaya Rossiya, Volume 2, 'Krushenie', Tel Aviv: Vremya: my, 1976, p.120.
8. See the content analysis of Chakovskii's two short novels *God zhizni* (1957) and *Dorogi, kotorye my vybiraem*, (1960) in appendix 6.
9. Rzhnevsky in Hayward and Crowley, op. cit. p.68.
10. R. Orlova, Vospominaniya o neproshedshem vremeni, Michigan: Ardis Publishers, 1983, p.205.
11. See appendix 6.
12. L. Labedz, ed., Solzhenitsyn: A Documentary Record, Penguin Books, second edition, 1974, pp.75-7.
13. G. Markov, a close friend of Brezhnev, became first secretary of the Writers' Union in 1971.
14. Labedz, loc. cit.. Perel'man claims that the unsigned articles attacking Solzhenitsyn came straight from the CC; see Perel'man, op. cit. p.147.
15. D. Burg and G. Feifer, Solzhenitsyn, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974, p.211.

16. Yu. Glazov, The Russian Mind since Stalin's Death, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Corporation, 1985, p.210.

17. A. I. Solzhenitsyn, The Oak and the Calf - A Memoir, London: Collins and Harvill Press, 1980, p.120 and p.182; and Garrard, op. cit. p.72.

18. Yu. G. Burtin, 'Istoriki i pisateli o literature i istorii - materialy konferentsii', Voprosy istorii, 1988, No.6, pp.77-9: in reply to Burtin's virulent attack, Chakovskii defended LG's contribution to the fight against 'bureaucratism, boorishness and parasitism' and its active promotion of ecology 'at a time when the word hardly existed'. He also accused Burtin of wanting to start a witch-hunt; same document, p.82.

19. J. Wishnevsky, op. cit. p.7.

20. W. E. Buzek, How the Communist Press Works, London: The Pall Mall Press, 1964, p.66.

21. This question will be discussed in more depth in chapter II, section 1.

22. Buzek, op. cit. p.80.

23. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson & A. R. Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR, Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1982, p.122.

24. See appendix 5.

25. Soviet Biographic Archives (1954-85), compiled by Radio Liberty: information extracted from 2 Soviet publications: Inostrannaya literatura, 1976, No.9, p.287 and Sobranie postanovlenii pravitel'stva SSSR, 1977, No.10 and 1984, No.7.

26. Dzirkals et al, op. cit. p.119.

27. Dzirkals et al, op. cit. p.118; see also V. Perel'man, who describes Terteryan as a 'cynical wit' who 'managed to outlast four chief-editors, which, however, cost him two or three heart attacks'; Perel'man, op. cit. p.121.

28. Dzirkals et al, op. cit. p.118.

29. Perel'man, op. cit. pp.115-6 and p.141; rumour had it that Syrokonskii had been given carte blanche by the Central Committee to recruit staff, hence, in particular, the high number of Jewish journalists.

30. Soviet Biographic Archives, op. cit.: Zhurnalists, 1967, No.1, p.38.

31. Dzirkals et al, loc. cit..

32. Perel'man describes him as 'completely lacking in a sense of humour', but endowed with the ability to 'keep silent'. Chakovskii seemed to value his judgement and would often ask him: 'Well... and what has Evgenii Alekseevich got to say about this? As they say, he is our commissar...'; Perel'man, op. cit. p.121.

33. M. Hopkins, Mass Media in the Soviet Union, New York: Pegasus, 1970, pp.156-60.

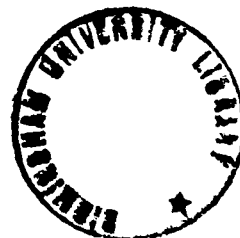
34. Soviet Biographic Archives, op. cit.: LG, 1978, No.50, p.5.

35. See, for example, Smirnov-Cherkezov's short novel which focuses on the young technical intelligentsia: Dom

kholostyakov, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sovetskii pisatel', 1962: it is a humane, if not particularly radical, account of the difficulties met by a young engineer in her first job on an industrial construction site in the Altai region. One of the main themes of the novel is the impact of the erratic and unreliable planning system on the work of managers, who are constantly forced into breaking the law as cooking the books is often the only way of ensuring that the work goes on.

36. Dzirkals et al, op. cit. pp.119-20.

37. Dzirkals et al, loc. cit.; see also Perel'man, op. cit. pp.159-61: Perel'man remembers being congratulated by Smirnov-Cherkezov for writing daring articles about the shortcomings of the health service; according to Perel'man, he was honest and straightforward.



## II. THE LAUNCHING OF THE NEW FORMAT

### 1. For a Partnership between Journalism and Sociology

Literaturnaya gazeta began to inform its readership of the forthcoming new format in the winter of 1966, greatly emphasizing the need to use the expertise of sociologists in order to enhance the quality of journalism. The issue of 12 November 1966 had its page 2 entirely devoted to sociology with a short paragraph at the bottom of the page announcing the paper's intention to include a regular sociology section.

The introductory article, entitled 'Sociology: problems and facts', refers to the XXIII Party Congress's appeal for more research into social phenomena and proposes that Literaturnaya gazeta should contribute to popularizing sociological findings.

We would like sociologists, and anyone interested in sociology, to regard Literaturnaya gazeta as their platform where they can familiarize the public with the results of their research... Today we are publishing the first of our pages devoted to sociology.<sup>1</sup>

This first page contains two main articles written by experts (one of them is the well established economist and demographer V. Perevedentsev) and one humorous piece; all three in defence of sociology. Readers are also invited to return a questionnaire on job satisfaction, the results of which will be published in the paper. This seems to suggest that Literaturnaya gazeta did not only wish to serve as a



receptacle for the work of sociologists, but also intended to borrow certain methods of this developing science in the hope of regaining some latitude to practise a degree of investigative journalism. The word 'science' ('nauka') enjoys great status in the Soviet Union, and it is likely that journalists saw in their alliance with sociologists a way of stressing the scientific, therefore acceptable, foundation of research into social phenomena as well as a chance to secure a certain amount of leeway for themselves. Journalists could only benefit from the recognition and development of a new social science aimed, in particular, at examining the effects, good or bad, of economic policies on people's lives.

Perevedentsev argues that sociology can help to manage society more efficiently by destroying myths and stereotypes. As an example of what it can achieve, he examines the question of high labour turnover ('tekuchest'), and disputes the fact that this phenomenon should be described solely in negative terms. Workers who wish to give up jobs they have not been trained for should not be frowned upon, but congratulated. Perevedentsev also establishes a link between the high rate of turnover and the lack of job satisfaction - precisely the issue tackled in the questionnaire -, and calls for the setting up of an adequately vocational guidance service. Finally, he draws the more general conclusion that economic measures alone cannot solve economic problems.

Sociology was not a completely new discipline for Soviet academics. In her study of the development of sociology in the Soviet Union, E. A. Weinberg notes that courses in this discipline were already taught in a number of Russian universities before the Revolution and that Russian sociologists appeared well acquainted with the works of their European counterparts whose writings were often available in translation. In the twenties the tone of the debate amongst sociologists was to a great extent set by Bukharin's book, Theory of Historical Materialism - A Popular Textbook of Marxist Sociology. At the same time, during the relatively liberal decade following the October Revolution, a significant amount of empirical research was carried out. It was in the thirties when sociology was assigned the task of serving the Party that it finally disappeared as an independent academic subject. Some sociological research did take place during the Stalin years, but under the cover of other disciplines, in particular ethnography and anthropology. In the fifties, encouraged by the political thaw started by the XX Party Congress, Soviet academics worked for the re-establishment of sociology as a science in its own right, albeit within the constraints of Marxism-Leninism. The battle proved to be arduous and, arguably, yielded disappointing results, yet the discipline received official recognition at the XXIII Party Congress held in March-April 1966.<sup>2</sup>

The development of sociology held out a promise of openness. Potentially it was a way of pushing back the limits imposed by political and economic theories which had so far resolutely denied the legitimacy of human resistance to the system. The official brand of Marxism had artificially organized people into neat social groups whose aspirations had been overlooked for many years. Perevedentsev's article, for example, acknowledges the fact that people had found ways of resisting the system, thus pointing up its inadequacies.

The 'human factor', a notion which would frequently recur in the discourse of Gorbachev's supporters, was beginning to be seen as a vital element to be taken into account in order to provide a more realistic assessment of the system's shortcomings. While the tendency under Gorbachev was to emphasize the positive ways in which the 'human factor' could and should be exploited - personal initiative and the competitive spirit were now actively promoted - in the sixties the main concern was to show the limits of a rigid, predominantly economic approach to the management of society.

The new emphasis on the importance of studying social phenomena was part of a broader attempt at reintroducing a human dimension into a dehumanizing political system which had functioned for nearly three decades showing little consideration for the individual's well-being. It was finally recognized that the system could no longer be allowed to exist for its own sake, ignoring people's needs and

aspirations. It is significant that, during the press-conference where he presented the new format, Chakovskii should have spoken of the 'spiritual demands' ('dukhovnye zaprosy') of the nation.

This [the reorganization of the paper] has been done first of all because during the past few years the spiritual life of Soviet people in general and of the intelligentsia in particular has become richer and more complex. We decided to reorganize Literaturnaya gazeta precisely in order to cater for the spiritual needs of Soviet readers in the best possible way.<sup>3</sup>

Chakovskii's assumption that Soviet people's 'spiritual demands' did not deserve so much attention in the past is, to say the least, debatable. However, the message was clear: the readership had become more demanding and the paper would regain - or is it 'gain'? - some credibility only if it addressed issues going beyond 'myths and stereotypes'. As sociology was a new discipline, free from cumbersome Stalinist traditions, it was hoped that it could make a substantial contribution to this process of enlightenment.

In the years 1967-71 Literaturnaya gazeta did contribute to the promotion of sociological research, printing a significant number of articles written on various social issues by sociologists. On the other hand in the years 1970-71 the rarity of contributions focusing on the problems encountered by the profession itself testified to the precarious position of this recently resuscitated science, increasingly perceived by the conservative political

establishment as a threat to its vested interests. In her conclusion on the development of Soviet sociology from the mid-fifties to the mid-seventies, Weinberg argued that, while there was no evidence of Marxism-Leninism shaping 'concrete' sociological research, the future of the discipline would depend on political developments and that the general tightening up observed since 1967 was undoubtedly an ominous sign.<sup>4</sup> And indeed most of the articles that Literaturnaya gazeta published on the subject between 1967 and 1971 are suffused by the fear of seeing the further development of sociology hindered by the conservative backlash.

Looking at page 2 in the issue of 12 November 1966, one can already detect a certain degree of caution in the way the paper set out to promote sociology, which suggests that this social science had not yet attained the highest level of academic respectability on a par with, say, economics.<sup>5</sup> The enthusiasm permeating the already mentioned articles is somewhat tempered by two other pieces exploring the possible danger of misusing questionnaires and surveys.

In the article entitled 'Responsibility' Ya. B. Aleksandrovich, himself a sociologist, warns fellow researchers against jumping to hasty and reckless conclusions. However, it is clear that the article was written not so much for the benefit of sociologists as for that of the authorities. Aleksandrovich's warning against unsound investigation techniques turns out to be a mere stratagem for advocating further development of the

discipline. He argues that the occasionally low level of sociological research is due to a lack of adequate training and facilities, and calls for the provision of urgently needed suitable teaching material and the setting up of more sociology courses in higher education. The humorous piece, which aims to show how one can reach ludicrous conclusions by asking the wrong questions in the wrong way, echoes Aleksandrovich's defence of the discipline. Sociology is a serious business which needs to be treated seriously.

The dozen or so articles on sociology published by Literaturnaya gazeta between 1967 and 1971 (approximately 18,000 words) reiterate and develop the main arguments put forward by Aleksandrovich. Several authors warn, in particular, against the danger of using unsound methods of research in studying public opinion. As in Poland, opinion polling was initiated by the media. In the Soviet Union it was the newspaper Komsomol'skaya pravda which set up the first public opinion institute with the help of the sociologist B. Grushin. In her study of Soviet sociology, Weinberg argues that while some criticisms levelled at the polls conducted by Komsomol'skaya pravda between 1960 and 1967 were justified, the youth paper should nevertheless be given its due for bringing the discussion on public opinion research into the academic world, thus serving the best interests of Soviet sociology.<sup>6</sup> Yet judging by the articles published by Literaturnaya gazeta in 1967-69 academic sociologists felt that they had to distance themselves from

these sometimes unprofessionally conducted polls in order to defeat any attempt at tarnishing the reputation of their still immature discipline. V. Yadov, for instance, in an article revealingly called 'Prestige under threat...', condemns the 'questionnaire mania' ('anketomaniya') that seems to have swept the country; yet he vehemently rejects the thought that Grushin and his colleagues could be held responsible for it, and sees the unwillingness of the Central Statistical Board to make vital data available and authorize nationwide surveys as the main obstacle in the way of sound and productive sociological research.<sup>7</sup>

The failure of sociology to bring about reforms is identified as an additional reason for the decline in its prestige. Some contributors unceremoniously urge sociologists, 'too busy writing their theses', to go out and work in industry; others maintain that the job of sociologists is to make recommendations, on the basis of which state organizations ought to take practical steps.<sup>8</sup>

V. Perevedentsev is among those who deplore the lack of concrete results, pointing the finger at the decision-makers who ignore the research already achieved and hamper the development of academic structures that would enable sociology to attain higher levels of sophistication and efficiency. In three lengthy articles, Perevedentsev, clearly angered by the authorities' passive resistance, calls for the urgent setting up of sociology departments in Soviet universities and institutes. Sociology needs all the

facilities made available by the higher education system in order to build on the work already achieved by all these philosophers, economists, demographers and so forth who have already been involved in sociological research for many years in more than a hundred academic units scattered across the country. The work of some researchers, for example, Zaslavskaya, Levada and Grushin, has already met with great acclaim and shown how necessary sociology has become for the drawing up of socio-economic policies. Several contributors use similar argument. For instance, I. Bestuzhev, chairman of the Soviet Sociological Association's Research Committee for Social Prognosis, argues - predictably, one may say - that 'long-term planning is effective only when it is based on scientific findings'.<sup>9</sup>

Perevedentsev's articles, respectively published in 67, 69 and 70, stand out amongst the contributions for the defence of sociology in that they contain direct attacks on conservatives in the academic and political worlds. Sociology has its supporters, he remarks, but also its critics, such as, for instance, this 'very famous philosopher' who expressed misgivings about the need for such a discipline 'at a top scientific (vysokouchenom) meeting'. Nobody doubts that there is a need for sociology, he later suggests, 'at least no one has expressed any doubts in public'. Perevedentsev also takes the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education to task because of its opposition to the training of sociologists and denounces the authorities' claim that no



money is available to finance the further development of the discipline. 10

Very little was to be published on sociology after Perevedentsev's third piece, apart from a laudatory review of Shlyapentokh's book, Sociology for Everyone, and a journalist's article, taking up two whole pages, about the town of Taganrog, where a series of sociological surveys had been conducted. This report was a good example of cooperation between journalism and sociology, although, ironically, it must not be interpreted as a sign of impending victory for sociologists, who were in fact being increasingly silenced by censorship: only a small fraction of Grushin's study on propaganda and the media in Taganrog was allowed to be published.<sup>11</sup>

The idea, however, was not only that sociology could help journalists to loosen the grip of stifling political and economic dogmas and publish more realistic accounts of Soviet life. The sociologist's expertise was much sought after as a means of reviving the whole profession of journalism and improving the 'efficiency' of the press. In 1967 the year-old monthly journal Zhurnalist published a series of articles stressing the need to encourage sociological research into the media to this effect.

In 1967 the first issue of the journal contained an article entitled 'Research destroys stereotypes' by Vladilen Kuzin, who was deputy head of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Leningrad regional party committee.<sup>12</sup>

Kuzin argues that journalists must seek the expertise of sociologists in order to increase the 'efficiency' of the press. The media have failed to exert a significant influence on public opinion for the simple reason that journalists do not know their readership. The assumption that letters to the editor reflect the preoccupations of the vast majority of readers has been disproven, and journalists cannot gauge their readership on the basis of their experience alone. They need sociologists to tell them what their readers expect of the newspaper.

Kuzin also points out that the principle of differentiation, according to which different publications must be targeted at different social groups, is not a new one. However, although it was enunciated as early as the twenties, it has remained a 'mere slogan'.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Kuzin puts forward three different suggestions aimed at improving the quality of the press: 1) sociological surveys should be carried out in order to gain better knowledge not only of the readership, but also of the staff. (He gives the example of an illuminating survey which showed to the surprise of many that the majority of journalists in Leningrad and its region were over fifty years old.) 2) Cooperation between sociologists and editors should be reinforced. Whereas up till now their collaboration has occurred merely on a consultation basis, in the future each publication should have a sociologist and/or a psychologist

on its editorial board. 3) Finally, the training of journalists needs improving.

Kuzin's article was followed by several others in the same vein which contained equally strong appeals for what in the West would be termed 'market research'.<sup>14</sup> Obviously, such an exercise was geared to securing profits of an ideological rather than financial nature. Propaganda staff (several of these articles had been written or co-written by heads of propaganda departments) were becoming increasingly impatient to modernize the old-style propaganda techniques. It had become routine to argue that the media had failed not only to differentiate between different types of readership and audience, but also to keep up with the ever growing demands of a better educated population.

Such critical evaluation of the media stemmed from an awareness and recognition of the social changes which had occurred, in particular, as a result of the development of the education system. Perhaps more importantly, though, one can detect a veiled re-appraisal of the changing political climate. Since post-Stalin Soviet society had become less coercive, propaganda was to play an even more important role in winning the support of the population. All the above mentioned articles from Zhurnalists advance the same argument, i.e., the mass media will be more influential in shaping public opinion - or, to put it more crudely, propaganda will work better - if one can respond to people's expectations. Hence the need to seek the expertise of sociologists.

Each article makes out a case for a more realistic account of Soviet life, to which the reader will be able to relate. In the first article to appear under the new heading 'Sociological laboratory', Boris Firsov speaks of the 'infinite diversity and wealth of [the public's] demands which the media 'must absorb and reflect'.<sup>15</sup> In another article published under the same heading Yurii Kurganov, editor of the Gorkii region youth newspaper Leninskaya smena, and Tamara Kharlamova, head of the Propaganda Department of the same publication, insist that 'there is no such thing as an average reader' - a catchphrase which frequently recurs in various articles on the same theme.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time all these authors make it clear that the ultimate goal is to reinforce the impact of the media on public opinion. Firsov wants to know what 'changes in social and individual consciousness... have occurred as a result of the influence of the mass media'.<sup>17</sup> Kurganov and Kharlamova state bluntly that 'propaganda "in general" ("voobshche") has never been successful', thus pointing out the need to better target it.<sup>18</sup> Only one article put the emphasis on the need for 'glasnost' to encourage social participation rather than propaganda.<sup>19</sup>

It is tempting to argue that sociologists were merely required to provide the information that would enable propagandists to manipulate readers more successfully. It is probably safe to assume that the concern of propagandists was, indeed, to respond to an increasingly critical audience more

efficiently. On the other hand, it is equally important to evaluate the contribution of sociologists and their commitment to exposing reality. Propagandists and sociologists had different, potentially conflicting, professional interests, and some degree of collaboration between the two professions was likely to generate a certain amount of openness which, in the end, could undermine the impact of propaganda.

It is significant that none of the already mentioned articles from Zhurnalist attempt to examine the latent contradictions between the traditional propagandist function of the Soviet media and the publicly recognized need to voice the public's concerns and expectations in order to retain its attention. But, after all, what guarantee was there that by 'absorbing and reflecting people's expectations' the media would help to secure popular support? While admitting that it was time to modernize and refine their methods, propagandists were not questioning their basic and, one might argue, somewhat naive, assumption that the media, together with other socio-political agencies, can control the way in which opinions are shaped. Neither did they discuss whether the impact of propaganda could be undermined by a more honest account of reality and its numerous shortcomings.

Propagandists were unable, quite understandably, to resolve a contradiction which is inherent in the nature of the Soviet media. Indeed, while they had no alternative but to let reality creep into propaganda in the hope of exerting

some degree of influence on the public, there was no guarantee that, in the end, this would not go against their own interests.

This is not to say, however, that propagandists were incapable of holding their inevitably awkward relationship with social sciences in check. Recent Soviet studies of the Soviet media, covering the period from 1964 to 1985, seem to confirm this constant, albeit closely monitored, conflict between the basic demands of propaganda and the need for a greater flow of information. We know from accounts by former Soviet journalists now living in the West that these frictions could take various forms. They occurred at institutional level (propaganda department versus chief-editors), within the hierarchical structure (chief-editor versus journalists) or, very simply, within the professional activity of the journalist. As a matter of fact, it could be argued that the contradiction between the propagandist function of journalists and their responsibility to report on what actually goes on has always been embedded in the very 'Leninist principles' on which the profession is founded. It is, indeed, difficult to believe in the supposedly non-problematic juxtaposition of the principles of partinost' and pravdinost'.<sup>20</sup>

In his book published in 1986, The Efficiency of the Press, S.V. Tsukasov unintentionally demonstrates that the recipe does not really work.<sup>21</sup> Having reaffirmed the educational function of the Soviet media and paid tribute to

the past by acknowledging the gradual, but steady improvement of media 'efficiency' since the Revolution, Tsukasov eventually points to their many weaknesses and shortcomings. The media, he claims, have failed to keep up with the ever increasing cultural level and demands of the public.<sup>22</sup> This, of course, is a familiar argument - the usual coded way of saying that readerships have become more critical of the media and society at large.

Judging by Tsukasov's study the situation remained unchanged throughout the Brezhnev years, as is shown by the criticisms of the media voiced at the April 1985 Plenum of the CC of the CPSU. The media were still suffering from too much 'verbiage and the inability to talk to people with the language of truth' and, consequently, could not successfully educate public opinion ('vospitanie and 'ubezhdenie').<sup>23</sup> The argument has come full circle again and still fails to convince.

It is important to examine the support given by Literaturnaya gazeta to sociology in the broader context of the somewhat uneasy relationship which the Soviet press has with its readership. Two different, although not necessarily contradictory interpretations come to mind. On the one hand, the paper's appeal to sociologists that they should regard it as their platform indicates the board's willingness to move away from a cruder form of propagandist journalism. On the other hand, the move was possible only because propagandists were anxious to avoid the complete alienation of the

intelligentsia, and, therefore chose to open up the spectrum of debates. (The distinction between propagandists and journalists is an artificial one, made for the sake of the discussion. In reality, they can be one and the same person.)

The first interpretation might appear to be more optimistic. However, the second one suggests, perhaps more interestingly, that while one should not assume that Soviet journalists are powerless to defend their professional interests, it is evident that some important changes can take place as a result of the pressure from readers. After all, in any society, readers can demonstrate their dissatisfaction by removing their support.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. Change and Continuity

It is interesting to compare the Literaturnaya gazeta editorial of 4/1/67 with the advertising leaflet which was slipped into an earlier issue in the winter of 1966.<sup>25</sup> While in both cases the new format is presented as a promising development, the two items differ greatly in tone. Such a discrepancy cannot be accounted for solely by the intrinsic difference in the very nature of the documents. The leaflet goes to great lengths to highlight the changes that will transform the ageing organ of the Writers' Union into an exciting new weekly. Obviously, the editorial also sets out the ways in which the paper will improve, but unlike the leaflet it strongly emphasizes the paper's allegiance to the old ideological principles and its commitment to carrying out



the necessary changes in the spirit of its well-tried journalistic traditions.

The advertising leaflet is worth examining more closely, as it most probably reflects some of the expectations of both readers and journalists. Judging by the increasing circulation figures in the late sixties, these expectations seem to have been, at least partly and temporarily, fulfilled. In the second part of his memoirs, Pokinutaya Rossiya, former Soviet journalist Viktor Perel'man remembers how exciting it was to be working for the 'most popular publication in the country'. Literaturnaya gazeta, he recounts, 'had been printed on sixteen pages for more than a year and had won the support of hundreds of thousands of readers.... It seemed that as far as it was concerned there were no forbidden topics'.<sup>26</sup>

First of all, the leaflet lays great emphasis on news and topicality. 'Literaturnaya gazeta', it claims, 'will introduce you to new works of fiction, poetry and plays which have just been completed or, even, which are still in progress'. Information is promised on forthcoming books, films and theatre productions. More space is to be devoted to 'the latest scientific discoveries', 'the latest political, sociological and philosophical theories from abroad', to 'news on literature and the arts from each of the five continents'. In conclusion it is proclaimed that although 'Literaturnaya gazeta will come out every week', 'it is not a weekly' - a somewhat cryptic statement which is further

clarified in these terms : 'This is a new type of publication combining the specific character of a newspaper (i.e. topical socio-political information) with the publication of polemical (problemnyi) material'.

The second main objective of the leaflet is, indeed, to promote Literaturnaya gazeta as a forum for public discussion. The paper had been expanded with a view to publicizing 'various opinions on burning issues', whether in the field of literature and the arts or in the socio-economic domain. One cannot help feeling, though, that it is the discussion of socio-economic issues which is meant to put new life into the paper. (The section on literature and the arts takes up only a fifth of the leaflet.) The suggested areas include the economic reform, problems pertaining to the education system, moral and ethical questions, the law, living conditions (byt) and scientific discoveries. All 'aspects of the spiritual, social and working life of the Soviet person (sovetskii chelovek)' will be looked into.

Only a close analysis of the paper's content will make it possible to assess to what extent such ambitious intentions were realized. At this stage in our discussion it might be more helpful to look at what was actually missing from the leaflet. It is not suggested that the issues which are not mentioned in the leaflet - or, for that matter, in the editorial - will not be given any attention in the paper. But the mere fact that they do not figure prominently in documents aimed at stressing the most attractive qualities of

Literaturnaya gazeta, gives us some insight into the nature of the newborn weekly.

Most striking of all is the total absence of history. The word itself is nowhere to be found in the leaflet. A new section on contemporary history appeared as early as January 1967 with an introduction by Ernst Genri.<sup>27</sup> However, it appeared among the pages on 'International Life', and from a cursory reading of some 1967 issues it is evident that no such attention was to be focused on Soviet history. (The articles on Lenin and the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution were unlikely to contain controversial material.) Literaturnaya gazeta intended to stay away from the debates on the Stalin years which had been initiated, in particular, by Novyi mir.<sup>28</sup> This seems to corroborate the argument that the new Literaturnaya gazeta was the product of a compromise between the Brezhnevite political establishment and the intelligentsia, a kind of political contract the terms of which can be crudely formulated as follows: more debates on certain aspects of contemporary society, but no digging into the past. It is clear, though, that the inability to question the past could only limit the depth and scope of the debates on the present.

One is also struck by the lack of allusion to the existence of various social groups and their possibly conflicting interests. The leaflet clings to the notion of 'sovetskii chelovek', which presupposes a romantic and mythical image of Soviet society as a perfectly harmonious

community. Obviously, this does not mean that the paper's content will reflect such an unrealistic view of society. The emphasis on sociology, in particular, runs counter to the propagandist's insistence on social harmony. However, the latent contradictions between the two tendencies were likely to be instrumental in determining the way the paper would portray Soviet reality. The reluctance, or inability, to fully discuss the value of such criteria as, say, gender, nationality or class was bound to limit the paper's critical judgement and social awareness. (The drawing at the top of the leaflet portrays men only - what's more, men of European, or even, perhaps, Russian origin. Is it indicative of the way the staff unconsciously imagined their readership? Would the supposedly neutral word 'chelovek' happen to be more masculine than feminine?)

On the other hand, judging by the leaflet, the paper seemed to be genuinely concerned that the notion of 'sovetskii chelovek' should be interpreted in a liberal way. One could, perhaps, even speak of a certain form of pluralism; not in the sense, though, that group interests would be overtly acknowledged or the political leadership challenged. The understanding was that Soviet citizens could publicly appear to differ in their views so long as individual opinions did not blend into formally organized platforms.

Both the leaflet and the editorial stress that Literaturnaya gazeta will seek contributions from 'writers,

researchers and public figures' on socio-economic issues. The editorial also acknowledges the importance of the 'scientific and technical revolution' in the evolution of Soviet society. It contends that while Literaturnaya gazeta does not wish to compete with specialized publications, it will endeavour to alert the public to the impact of scientific and technical achievements on the 'spiritual and moral life of society'. At the same time, the editorialist seems to be anxious to play down the novelty of such a project by establishing a supposedly self-evident link between the unquestioned and unquestionable theory of socialist realism, and the need to give professionals from different backgrounds sufficient space to allow a broad discussion of socio-economic issues:

Faithful to its traditions, Literaturnaya gazeta will strive to examine questions of literature and art in close relation with the life of the people ... with all that in fact serves as the basic source and main object of artistic creation. Hence the interest we take in the observations of writers, researchers, public figures on various aspects of people's lives, in their thoughts about problems concerning the economic reform, morals, ethics etc...<sup>29</sup>

The editorial clearly recognizes the need to popularize knowledge and increase the flow of information. However, it neglects to say that the appeal to academics and professionals, whose commitment was likely to be primarily to their subjects or work areas, is a relatively recent phenomenon, which in fact has little to do with the demands

of socialist realism. In comparing some 1951 and 1971 issues of Pravda and Izvestiya J. F. Hough noticed a sharp increase over these twenty years in the proportion of academic and scientific personnel writing for these newspapers. In the past articles 'articulating demands' used to be produced predominantly by officials.<sup>30</sup>

Hough's observation also brings to our attention the fact that Literaturnaya gazeta was not the only publication to benefit from this new development, and, consequently, its increasing popularity in the late sixties cannot be accounted for by the rising participation of professionals only. Literaturnaya gazeta could potentially provide a more satisfactory platform for professionals as it had expanded considerably with the new format and addressed the most highly educated section of the population. Unlike Pravda and Izvestiya, for instance, it did not have to make allowances for the average reader (however mythical this notion may be). It was a newspaper made by professionals for professionals. Nevertheless, the crucial issue remains the quality of their involvement. How lively and varied were the debates? To what extent did the demands of propaganda make themselves felt?

The leaflet, unlike the editorial, lays heavy emphasis on the paper's intention to publicize a wide range of opinions, not only by inviting professionals to make contributions, but also by publishing a greater quantity of letters from readers. A whole paragraph in the leaflet deals with readers' participation, pledging that there will

be a special section for readers' letters in each issue of the paper. Readers are offered the opportunity to 'join any of the discussions and debates which will take place in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta and to express their views on any question worrying them'. The wording seems to suggest that Literaturnaya gazeta would particularly welcome letters containing opinions on general issues rather than particular grievances. Finally, the leaflet generously advertises the section to be devoted to humour - yet another possible channel for social comment.<sup>31</sup>

The editorial, unlike the leaflet, lays great stress upon ideology. Whereas the leaflet mentions the word only once, in the section on international affairs ('polemics with our ideological opponents'), the editorial strongly insists on the paper's past and future allegiance to Marxism and socialist realism, enthusiastically announces its coverage of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution and warns that while readers will be informed on foreign politics and culture, there will be no 'ideological compromises'. This is how the main functions of the paper are summed up:

1. Active participation in the communist education of working people.
2. Defence of the heroic traditions of the Soviet people, of its high humanist ideals.
3. Exposure of all that hinders the building of the new society.
4. Uncompromising struggle against any hostile ideology, against any attempt at revising Marxism-Leninism.<sup>32</sup>

Points 1, 2 and 4 hold out little promise of openness. The references to the educational function of the press and the 'heroic traditions' might possibly be dismissed - for the sake of argument - as routine statements, the significance of which should not be exaggerated. There is little doubt, though, that the last point contains a clear warning for the benefit of 'revisionists' at home, including Novyi mir and its supporters. At the same time, point 3 can be seen as echoing the more liberal tone of the leaflet, while being sufficiently vague to fit in with what is, on the whole, an orthodox declaration of principle.

The extremely cautious stance of the editorial does not so much question the veracity of the leaflet as suggest that each attempt at 'exposing' what 'hinders the building of the new society' will have to be negotiated separately behind the scenes, and the success of such attempt will depend on the political conjecture of the time.

The whole issue of 4/1/67 presents a somewhat uninspiring mixture of conservative material and items indicative of some degree of openness. One needs only to look at the names of the well-known literary figures whose contributions were included in the first issue. The 'liberals' are not totally absent. For instance, the issue contains some poetry by A. Tvardovskii. (By 1967 the position of Novyi mir had greatly weakened, but Tvardovskii was still its editor.)



More revealing, perhaps, is the choice of Pushkin's self-portrait as the symbol of the new Literaturnaya gazeta - the same portrait which appeared on the front page of Pushkin's and Del'vig's paper in 1830. At the bottom of page 3 a short tribute to Pushkin and Del'vig includes an extract from their first editorial in which they pledged to publish 'European and Russian literature, fiction and poetry, bibliographies and scientific news'. The names of Gogol and former Decembrists figured in the list of contributors. The editors attacked Grech and Bulgarin who had spoken against the introduction of progressive (peredovaya) literature into Russia in the paper Severnaya pchela. Commenting upon the extract Literaturnaya gazeta pays tribute to its ancestor, pointing out that it had set a priceless precedent in the history of the country by 'contributing to the diffusion of progressive ideas.'

Pushkin seems to have been a very thoughtful choice. On the one hand, the reference to the 'great Russian poet' could only flatter the nationalistic feelings of the conservatives. On the other, there was something promising in the choice of a literary figure who, for obvious reasons, had no connections with Soviet power and was famous for having angered the political Establishment of his time.

Yet there is no shortage of Establishment figures in the first issue of the new format. Gorky, whose portrait takes much of the front page, should certainly be included in this category. This is not so much a judgement on his literary

works, or political stance in the thirties, as a recognition of his official image as the first president of the Writers' Union and the father of socialist realism, who contributed a great deal to 'the development of the best traditions of the Russian national culture'.<sup>33</sup> In fact, a drawing of Gorky's profile eventually appeared at the top of the paper on the centenary of the writer's birth in April 1968.<sup>34</sup> The idea had been suggested by a reader and 'unanimously supported by the editorial board'. The reader argued that the symbolic reference to Pushkin was insufficient to convey the *raison d'être* of Literaturnaya gazeta. The paper's function was, indeed, to 'contribute to shaping the consciousness of builders of communism, to help writers understand all the difficulties facing them... to train young cadres'; in short, 'to realize all that the proletarian writer M. Gorky fought for'.<sup>35</sup>

The front page also contains a short item announcing the fourth publication of Sholokhov's works, and an article by K. Fedin wishing the new Literaturnaya gazeta good luck. Furthermore, although there are some non-Russian names (for example, Gamzatov and the Ukrainian writer Oles' Goncharov) and a contribution by Nataliya Il'ina, the paper seems to have remained predominantly Russian and male-dominated.

It has, of course, never been suggested that Literaturnaya gazeta was not a product of the cultural and political Establishment of the late sixties. But the very notion of Establishment is in itself imprecise, and refers to

a constantly, even if slowly, changing reality. After all, in the late sixties, Tvardovskii still belonged to the Establishment, while others had already been forced into dissidence or, simply, reduced to silence. It has been shown that the Establishment of the late sixties, usually - and rightly - described as more repressive than ten years earlier, was prepared to allow for a degree of openness and that in 1967 Literaturnaya gazeta was showing some signs of wanting to explore this opportunity. It is, however, important to acknowledge the heavy conservative presence in the paper.

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2. E. A. Weinberg, The Development of Sociology in the Soviet Union, London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, pp.1-11.
3. Soviet Biographic Archives (1954-85), compiled by Radio Liberty: '"Literaturka" daet SOV. ROSSIIA press-konferentsiyu', 3 January 1967.
4. Weinberg, op. cit. pp.108-9.
5. The sixties were also a period of revival for Soviet economics. However, it was not so much a question of rehabilitating the discipline, but rather of freeing it from the political dogmas that had hampered its development for nearly three decades. See M. Lewin, 'The Renaissance of Economics', Stalinism and the Seeds of Soviet Reform - The Debates of the 1960s, London: Pluto Press, 1991, pp.134-47.
6. Weinberg, op. cit. pp.82-107.
7. V. Yadov, 'Prestizh v opasnosti...', LG, 1968, No.9, p.11.
8. See the debate in LG, 1968, No.25, p.11.
9. I. Bestuzhev, 'Budushchee pomogaet nastoyashchemu', LG, 1967, No.18, p.11.
10. V. Mikhailov and V. Perevedentsev, 'Bol'shie ozhidaniya', LG, 1967, No.24, p.10; D. Zyuzin and V. Perevedentsev, 'Kogda zhe pridet spetsialist?', LG, 1969, No.2, p.11; V. Perevedentsev, 'Otkuda berutsya sotsiologi', LG, 1970, No.12, p.12; see also a couple of articles published in 1969: 'Dannye nauki ili samoobman?', LG, 1969, No.6, p.10, by G. Shchedrovitskii who tackles the question of the limitations of empirical research and advocates a more theoretical approach to the development of sociology; and a short article in LG, 1969, No.31, p.10, by G. Slesarev, a member of the jury who awarded the first prize for the best research work in sociology for 1965-7 to B.A. Grushin and I.S. Kon.
11. A. Levikov, 'Puteshestvie v srednii gorod', LG, 1970, No.24, pp.12-13; Vl. Kantorovich, 'O sotsiologii - dlya kazhdogo', LG, 1971, No.5, p.12.
12. Vl. Kuzin, 'Issledovanie razrushaet stereotip', Zhurnalist, 1967, No.1, pp.8-10.
13. Ibid. p.9.
14. See the surveys on the readership of Izvestiya, Trud and LG supervised by Shlyapentokh; the results were published in 1969: F. Burlatskii, ed., Chitatel' i gazeta, informatsionnyi Byulleten', No.21(36), Institut konkretnykh sotsial'nykh issledovaniy AN SSSR, Moscow, 1969.
15. B. Firsov, 'Massovaya kommunikatsiya', Zhurnalist, 1967, No.2, p.51.
16. Yu. Kurganov and T. Kharlamova, 'Anketa protiv mifa', Zhurnalist, 1967, No.7, pp.32-4; see also '2000 dadut otsenku' by Yu. Yurna, editor of Sovetskaya Estoniya, Zhurnalist, 1967, No.8, pp.44-45; and 'Srednego zritelya net' by B. Firsov in Zhurnalist, 1967, No.12, pp. 42-6.

17. B. Firsov, op. cit. p.52.
18. Kurganov and Kharlamova, op. cit. p.32.
19. 'Sila glasnosti' by B. Petukhov, first secretary of the Kirov regional party committee, Zhurnalists, 1967, No.8, pp.12-13.
20. See introduction, p.3.
21. S. V. Tsukasov, Effektivnost' pressy: zhurnalists, redaktsiya, chitatel', Moscow: Vysshaya shkola, 1986.
22. Ibid. p.48.
23. Ibid. p.56.: for Tsukasov the notions of vospitanie (education) and ubezhdenie (persuasion) are part of the same process.
24. Similar problems affected the world of literature. John and Carole Garrard argue that by the late 1970s the Party and the Writers' Union had succeeded in taming the writing community, yet 'millions of copies of ideologically correct Soviet novels lay unbought on the state bookstores' shelves'; Garrard; Inside the Writers' Union, London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1990, p.167.
25. See appendix 7.
26. V. Perel'man, Pokinutaya Rossiya, Volume 2, Tel Aviv: Vremya i my, 1976, p.114.
27. See LG, 1967, No.2, pp.14-15.
28. On the publications dealing with the repressions under Stalin, see, in particular, the section on 'historical revisionism' in D. R. Spechler, Permitted Dissent in the USSR: Novyi Mir and the Soviet Regime, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982, pp.140-61
29. LG, 1967, No.1, p.1.
30. J. F. Hough, 'Communications and Persuasion in the Analysis of Inputs', The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp.190-202.
31. According to the survey supervised by Shlyapentokh it was the most popular section in the paper: see Burlatskii, op. cit. p.173; see also Ilya Suslov, 'Censoring the journalist' in M. Tax Choldin and M. Friedberg, eds., The Red Pencil - Artists, Scholars, and Censors in the USSR, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p.148: Suslov, who worked as editor of LG humour column (page 16) before he emigrated to the USA, explains the fact they could publish daring pieces in this way: '...Chakovskii... and his assistants, Sorokomskii [Syrokomskii] and a few others, knew that the popularity of the newspaper depended on page 16. They knew that the newspaper's popularity depended on a few other sections that dealt with social problems that we discussed in very serious and interesting ways - although, of course, this was more talk than action. It was for these reasons that they did not prevent us from presenting certain pieces'.
32. LG, 1967, No.1, p.1.
33. Ibid.; It has been argued that Stalin used Gorky to give credibility to the newly created Writers' Union. The famous 'proletarian writer' undeniably took an active part in the promotion of the official literary credo, yet his own

brand of revolutionary romanticism significantly differed from what became known as 'socialist realism'; see Garrard, op. cit. p.31, p.34, p.36 & p.41 and G. Hosking, A History of the Soviet Union, London: Heinemann, 1990, pp.221-5.

34. See LG, 3 April 1968, p.1.

35. Ibid.

## PART TWO

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE

Over the years 1967-71 Literaturnaya gazeta published a considerable number of articles (approximately 150,000 words) which discuss the quality of human relations in Soviet society. These articles appeared under various headlines such as 'Life and Mores', 'Private Life', 'Ethics', 'Pedagogy', 'Writers and Life' or 'The Individual, the Collective and Society'. The above-mentioned number of words also includes readers' letters, accounts of round tables and Discussion Club pages on the same themes. These topics enjoyed a very high degree of popularity, unlike economic issues, for instance, which received 3,5 times more coverage.<sup>1</sup>

A number of issues were tackled, ranging from criticisms of bad manners, 'little Stalins' and uncaring administrations to the social organization of leisure and the urgently needed development of human sciences, in particular psychology. While the debates differ widely in tone, scope and approach, they all seem to stem from the basic concern to reassess the relationship between the individual and the collective.

Soviet ideologists have repeatedly refuted the assumption made by some Western critics that the socialist

system is incompatible with the freedom of the individual. They usually reverse the accusations, reminding us of the old masters' theory of alienation in capitalist society. A. Arnoldov's defence of socialist humanism is a model of the genre:

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels consistently defended the individual, came against the social conditions that deformed the individual, called for the revolutionary transformation of social relations in order to eliminate all forms of alienation of the individual... Revolutionary humanism is linked with the practical fight of working people, led by the working class, for a radical transformation of social relations along Communist lines. Only such a transformation of society is a reliable basis for full, all-round development of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

According to this theory the emancipation of the individual can be achieved only through the emancipation of the group. It is assumed that working people - and all 'good' Soviet citizens are working people - share the same interests in the building of the new society as they did in the destruction of the old one. The unity of the oppressed, which crystallized in a specific set of historical circumstances culminating in the revolutionary events of 1917, has been set up as a timeless and unquestionable moral principle. It is taken for granted that no new relations of oppression can replace the old ones. Harmony is what characterizes the new order.

Collectivism was not a new concept born of the October Revolution. In The Origin of Russian Communism, Nikolai



Berdyaev convincingly argues that in fact 'Bolshevism fitted in with the Russian collectivism which had its roots in [the orthodox] religion' and emphasizes that collectivist values were promoted by both religious and materialist Russian thinkers throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Discussing the ideas of Belynsky, 'an intellectual ancestor of Russian communism', Berdyaev describes the tragic logic of revolutionary collectivist theories in these terms:

Revolution overthrows the 'general' which had oppressed the human individual person, but makes him subject to a new 'general', to a society which demands for itself the complete submission of man. Such is the fateful development of religious-socialist and atheist thought.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the socio-economic fabric of pre-Revolutionary Russia presented a number of collectivist features. The Russian peasant commune (mir), a structure that was often reproduced in the towns where workers tended to organize themselves into co-operatives (artel'), placed a great deal of emphasis on community of interests, collective decision-making and discipline in both economic and ethical matters. G. Hosking suggests that, before they became mere instruments of the Party, councils of workers greatly benefited from the experience that peasants and workers had acquired in running rural or urban communes.<sup>5</sup> According to the same author some aspects of the old Russian commune might have even survived in modern Soviet life:

It is my impression... that even after these popular communities were destroyed, something of their *spirit*

survived in distorted form in the dwelling patterns of the city... The underlying habit of mutual aid, combined with mutual supervision, has survived and indeed spread to other strata of the population as former peasant children left the village and moved up the social scale.<sup>6</sup>

It is, nevertheless, equally important to stress that the bolshevik conception of collectivism differed significantly from the traditional Russian commune. Collectivism as a principle governing social relations was perceived by the new rulers as the natural corollary of the public ownership of the means of production. A form of patriarchal collectivism based on the unquestioned domination of the elders (starosta) as well as the wealthy was clearly incompatible with the communist vision.

The idealism of the bolshevik collectivist dream, however, coexisted with a realistic appreciation of existing social relations, and the intolerance of the peasant commune was soon to be replaced by the increasing authoritarianism of the dominant ideology. Publicly recognizing that even the workers' psychological make-up would not change overnight, the Bolsheviks, who never had any qualms about proclaiming their alleged superior understanding of what was best for the masses, set out to 'educate' and 're-educate' them. In a highly propagandist book published in 1973, Soviet Man - The Making of a Socialist Type of Personality, G. Smirnov stresses the extent of the work that awaited the new regime in the wake of the Revolution with irreproachable frankness:

...the task was not confined to the peasantry and the old intelligentsia. It was necessary to 'remake' and 're-educate' the proletarians themselves, who would not shed their petty-bourgeois illusions at once but only in the course of prolonged and difficult mass struggle against petty-bourgeois influence.<sup>7</sup>

Smirnov unwittingly suggests that the collectivist ethos was imposed upon the population, and perhaps even implies, if one accepts that he is likely to have written these lines with his contemporaries in mind, that the endeavour has not been altogether successful.

Smirnov's book is particularly relevant to this study as it was written roughly at the time when the debates examined in this section were publicized. Clearly designed to serve as both a reply to Western critics of Soviet society and a warning to Soviet citizens attracted to the ideas of the Prague Spring, the book is a useful reminder of where official ideology stood on the subject of the individual versus the collective.

Content to recognize that the question of individual freedom lies at the centre of the ideological and theoretical contest between socialism and capitalism, Smirnov enthusiastically advocates 'communist humanism', which, he argues, 'comprises the ideas of the freedom and dignity of the individual, the ideas of collectivism and the idea of the liberation of man by means of revolution'.<sup>8</sup> As expected of any dutiful ideologist, he reaffirms the superiority of the collectivist vision, invoking the name of Anton Makarenko,

who has been officially proclaimed the father of collectivism since the mid-forties.

Recent studies on Makarenko suggest that his character and ideas might have been somewhat simplified and distorted by official propaganda and that further research is needed to establish to what extent his ideas have influenced Soviet educational practices.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of the present study, however, is not to discuss the work of Makarenko as such, but only to highlight his views on collectivism which have been taken over by official ideology.

In his book on Makarenko, J. Bowen underlines the Soviet educationalist's extreme isolation in the twenties. His views were at variance with the development of theoretical research which inspired the educational policies laid down by the government.<sup>10</sup> At the time most Soviet educationalists researched into theories that had originated in the West, involving, in particular, the study of the psychology of the individual. At the same time they contributed to the development of educational practices based on the assumption that the goal of the new society was to allow the parallel blossoming of both the individual and the collective. Bowen points out that the officially endorsed policy of Soviet education during the twenties was clearly concerned 'with realizing the values of the individual personality and with a decidedly democratic, child-centered rationale for the whole educative process'.<sup>11</sup>

Makarenko, on the other hand, was very dismissive of all these new theories, his interest lying with social psychology only. His conception of collectivism significantly differed from that advocated by the progressive educationalists of the twenties. He firmly believed in the supremacy of the collective over the individual as he clearly demonstrated himself in fictionalized accounts of his work with delinquent orphans (bezprizorniki). While readily acknowledging that some individuals may rebel against the collectivist way of life, he regarded this rejection as the failure of the individual to identify with the collective or possibly the failure of the collective to persuade the individual to conform. The collectivist system, however, was never at fault. Commenting upon the lack of compassion in Makarenko's account of one of the youngster's suicide, brought about, it would seem, by his inability to fit in with the commune and to accept its severe criticism of his actions, Bowen remarks that Makarenko 'adamantly refused to admit of any individuality being more important than the group'.<sup>12</sup>

Not only was Makarenko in the twenties isolated from the vast majority of educationalists, he also frequently found himself in conflict with the political, social and educational agencies. It is only in the <sup>late</sup> thirties <sup>and forties</sup> that he became an officially recognized and adulated figure, even though there is evidence that some of his theories were still criticized by the Party, in particular his neglect of the formal side of schooling.<sup>13</sup> On the whole, however, Stalin's

oppressive policies of forced collectivization and rapid industrialization created a climate hospitable to Makarenko's authoritarian brand of collectivism based on self-sacrifice, self-discipline and the work ethic. His influence did not wane after Stalin's death. Bowen remarks that in the fifties and sixties Makarenko 'was accepted by most Soviet educators in some form or other as their educational model and mentor'.<sup>14</sup> In her study of Soviet children's literature, O'Dell identifies collectivism as one of the main features of Soviet morality. From early childhood, she argues, the Soviet individual learns

to suppress his own desires if they clash with those of the collective. It is held that, in fact, the ultimate interest of the individual will not be at variance with those of society.<sup>15</sup>

Writing in the seventies Smirnov exposes the collectivist theory with a certain degree of circumspection. While Makarenko had little time for the dissenting individual, Smirnov seems to favour a more equal partnership between collective and individual, as shown by this extract:

... collectivism in terms of actual relationships signifies that a person should act with due consideration for the general interests and rules of collectivism and not undertake actions that could harm the collective as a whole. Collectivism also presupposes that the collective should show equal care and consideration for each one of its members.<sup>16</sup>

The message seems to be that it takes a bit of give and take. In fact, Shlapentokh remarks that most of the

officially sanctioned literature on Soviet ideology that was published between the mid-fifties and the mid-eighties put 'a more "humanistic" emphasis on the "combination" of individual and social interest'. However, the assumption remained that the individual's main concerns coincided with those of the collective.<sup>17</sup> And indeed, returning to the question of possible divergence between individual and collective interests at a later stage in the book, Smirnov leaves his readers in no doubt as to how the conflict must eventually be resolved:

The personal remains personal as long as it does not conflict with the interests of society, and thus once again is not an entirely personal matter. For other people, for society, the behaviour of the individual continues to be entirely his personal affair only as long as it does not affect other people, the interests of society.<sup>18</sup>

The dogma is still alive and kicking.

The attention given by Literaturnaya gazeta to conflictual situations - an expression frequently used by the paper - between members of the collective does not necessarily signify that the official theory of collectivism is being questioned. Once they have defined the fundamental principles of socialist morality, Soviet ideologists hasten to add that Rome was not built in a day. A number of 'anti-social phenomena' are usually mentioned - namely alcoholism, lack of work discipline, money-grabbing, selfishness and hooliganism - which are inevitably presented as remnants of the old morality, 'survivals of capitalism'.<sup>19</sup> The aim of

this study is to establish whether the debates on the quality of human relations in Soviet society cohere with this theoretical framework, which was still part of the official dogma at the time, or whether they constitute an attempt to question its limitations.



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### III. PERCEPTIONS OF THE COLLECTIVE

#### 1. Bad Manners and Unsocial Behaviour

The majority of the articles dealing with human relations aim at decrying some of the harsh aspects of Soviet everyday life. On the whole the social comments remain fairly tame, merely hinting at the human miseries produced by the system. Yet they nevertheless serve to undermine the Soviet dream of the happy collective, which figured so prominently in Stalinist imagery. The discussion on bad manners belongs to this category of seemingly innocuous debates which nevertheless expose some aspects of popular discontent and social conflicts.

The discussion, which took place in a dozen articles and readers' letters over the years 67, 68 and 69, was triggered off by V. Dudintsev in the third issue of the new Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>1</sup> It is pointed out in the introduction that with this article Dudintsev is making his contribution to a six-year-old debate on people's behaviour in the social environment, at work and in the family. As a matter of fact, the writer had been asked to respond to the flood of mail received by the paper following the publication of an article on 'Soviet etiquette'. It is clear that Dudintsev sympathizes with the readers' common complaint that they often have their everyday existence ruined by rude, unkind or even aggressive behaviour. 'Boorishness' ('khamstvo') can take various forms and manifests itself in different places: at

home - especially in communal flats -, in shops - on each side of the counter -, or at work where management do not think twice about addressing their staff as 'ty' and generally do not see it as their job to spare their feelings.<sup>2</sup> 'Boorishness' can also be the kind of behaviour which at night 'forces women to take to their heels at the sound of footsteps behind them'.

Dudintsev's article was followed by a series of contributions from readers, fellow writers and journalists who share the same indignation and weariness of being regularly exposed to insensitive behaviour. A reader blames teachers for taking the liberty of using the 'ty' form when addressing children, whether they know them well or not; it is argued that youngsters will internalize better patterns of behaviour only if adults set a good example.<sup>3</sup> Worse cases of offensive behaviour are reported. For instance, B. Volodin sympathetically relates the story of a woman reader who has had to put up with tactless remarks about her disfigured face all her life. She was even laughed at by a cosmetic surgeon who unceremoniously wondered why she should worry about her looks so late in life.<sup>4</sup> Vl. Amlinskii reports how a shop assistant gratuitously brought an elderly woman to tears. 'What do you want bread for, granny?', she gently inquired, 'You should be on your way to the crematorium!' Amlinskii was relieved to hear that the rest of the queue vehemently stood up for the elderly lady.<sup>5</sup>

A reader raises the problem of social snobbery.<sup>6</sup> The author of the letter, a porter at the Moscow restaurant 'Ararat', complains of having been repeatedly abused by customers. He gives the example of a 'people's artist in a state of intoxication' who called him a 'lackey' because he refused to let him in. Remembering with conspicuous nostalgia the kind words of prestigious visitors, such as Gagarin, the porter laments the declining moral standards, especially among young people - even those from 'good families' - who think they have the right to be rude to porters, waiters and cleaners. After all, he concludes, society does not need highly educated specialists only. The letter, which at times is reminiscent of a servant longing for his forever lost 'good master', is followed by a thank-you note from the editors, who send their regards to its author and his colleagues. Porters are, indeed, easy targets for vindictive members of the public, but they also have the power to keep you out.

Except for this letter, most contributions have this in common; that they highlight offensive behaviour on the part of men and women in the course of their professional duties whether they are doctors, teachers, managers or shop assistants. In fact, with all due respect to the porter of the 'Ararat', one might want to add his occupation to the list; it is, after all, difficult to keep one's composure when dealing with frustrated customers.

Unsocial behaviour is not the preserve of unsocial elements. It can be witnessed amongst people who belong to various social strata and whose professional and social contribution might have been acknowledged and rewarded. What links these people is an awareness that their work is not judged according to public opinion, and therefore their position within a work collective gives them power over the outsider. Shortages of consumer goods and inadequate services also help to create a climate of hostility between some categories of personnel and the general public.

The authors of the articles and letters do not consciously establish a connection between function and behaviour. The debate is rather superficial. Any attempt to seriously tackle the roots of the problem would involve discussing some aspects of Stalinism which have had disastrous effects on the social fabric of the country. It is significant that no social scientist was asked to take part in the debate. Some contributors only appeal to their compatriots' sense of responsibility. Others believe in the educational virtue of propaganda, like, for instance, the journalist A. Protopopova who calls for more popular literature on Soviet etiquette for the benefit of schools and families.<sup>7</sup>

However superficial the debate might be, it is nevertheless interesting because it focuses on relationships between individuals rather than on the relationship between the individual and the collective, which is at the heart of

the doctrine of collectivism. Furthermore, unsocial behaviour is not presented as a remnant of capitalism. As a matter of fact, most contributors agree with Dudintsev that the root of the problem is to be found in the rejection of what used to be called 'bourgeois morality' in the years following the Revolution.

Dudintsev does not go so far as to question the supposedly revolutionary nature of the new morality promoted in the twenties. He claims to understand how the banishment of the tie, and the systematic use of the 'ty' form and the word 'comrade' came to symbolize the beginning of a new era. People were eager to leave behind what they saw as manifestations of social hypocrisy. However, new socio-political conditions dictate new moral norms.

The irony is that Dudintsev cannot find an alternative better than resurrecting the pre-1917 code of behaviour. It would simply need updating so that it encompasses the notions of equality and mutual respect promoted by the October Revolution. Judging by the response to his article, the common feeling seems, indeed, to be that the country needs a Soviet code of behaviour which would be a mixture of socialist principles and pre-revolutionary values. A librarian from Kalinin agrees that the moral standards of the twenties are irrelevant to the present times, and that politeness and chivalry are essential to help people to respect one another.<sup>8</sup> Protopopova concedes that pre-

revolutionary etiquette was not all bad. Just think of Chekhov who never failed to stand up when a woman came in!

None of the articles contains so much as an attempt to analyse the reasons why the revolutionary values of the twenties have produced such disappointing results. A Western observer might be hard pressed to grasp the connection between Soviet people's legitimate demand for a more caring society and their longing for outmoded rules of behaviour. It is clear, however, that etiquette is not what it is all about. All contributors see good manners as a way of showing consideration and kindness. The message is that the time has come to create a social environment where the individual can feel safe and dignified. And this can be achieved only by rehabilitating certain universal moral values which have been rejected by the class-based doctrine of collectivism and undermined by a series of traumatic upheavals in the history of Soviet society. No matter how trivial the debate on etiquette may seem, it shows a willingness to de-ideologize moral issues and to shift the focus from the supremacy of the collective to the neglect of the individual.

During a round table, an account of which appeared under the title 'About Human Dignity', the writer Yurii Yakovlev openly questions the view that priority should be given to collectivist values.<sup>9</sup> While approving of the high status enjoyed by such notions as patriotism, love of work and social duty, he deplores the fact that little has been done

to protect 'the dignity and honour of the individual'. The moral code of Soviet society needs to be reassessed.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The Neglect of the Weak: the Case of the 'Invalids'

In his contribution to the debate on etiquette the writer Sergei Mikhalkov warns that good manners are no guarantee of kindness and altruism. What Soviet citizens should aspire to is 'spiritual beauty', which involves assisting one another and caring for the weak.<sup>11</sup> This rather banal advocacy of what could easily pass for Christian values is worth noticing only inasmuch as the protection of the weak has never been very high on the social agenda of the CPSU. The debate organized by Literaturnaya gazeta on the problems faced by disabled war veterans seems to show that Mikhalkov's article may well echo a widely felt need for a more caring society, capable of looking after its weaker members.

The discussion began in 1968 with an article in which Leonid Zhukhovitskii relates the dreadful experience suffered by a disabled war veteran while trying to buy a rail ticket.<sup>12</sup> The man, who had lost a leg in the war, was first of all knocked down by someone who did not even take the time to apologize; he was then rudely reminded by the station staff that only 'Heroes of the Soviet Union' did not have to wait in the queue, and was finally rebuffed by an equally unhelpful policeman. The man returned home humiliated and ticketless. Zhukhovitskii concludes that disabled war veterans should be shown the respect they deserve and urges



the relevant authorities to take concrete measures to make their lives more comfortable.

It could be argued that Literaturnaya gazeta did not take much risk in choosing to concentrate on the case of war veterans, as the Establishment had no alternative but to support such a noble cause. Zhukhovitskii certainly does not hesitate to play the patriotic card. By doing so, he underlines the discrepancy between deeds and words, the hypocrisy of leaders who are swift to endorse Soviet patriotism, but show little concern for the everyday problems of disabled war veterans. Yet Zhukhovitskii puts the emphasis on the need to help these people primarily because of their physical handicap, thus considerably broadening the debate.

In a second article published a few months later, Zhukhovitskii makes it clear that the problem does not lie in inadequate social policies only, but also in the often unsympathetic attitude of the general public and organizations towards the disabled.<sup>13</sup> This is the conclusion he drew from reading letters the paper received from many physically handicapped people following the publication of his first article. The letters contain many practical suggestions, such as allowing disabled war veterans to be served outside the queue and to wear a badge proving they are entitled to preferential treatment. But the authors of the letters also describe many occasions on which they were prevented from leading a normal life because they were openly rejected by their fellowmen. A reader, for instance, relates

how he has been repeatedly refused access to beaches, parks, stadiums or even exhibitions by staff or the police on the ground that he was in a wheelchair. Another man, who needed a medical certificate to apply for a holiday abroad, was told by his doctor that 'he would never let anyone in a wheelchair go abroad'. The disabled do not only have their social life impaired by their compatriots' prejudices. They often are completely ostracized as it is practically impossible for them to get a job. They are condemned to loneliness and, in some cases, poverty. Finally, Zhukhovitskii enthusiastically supports one of the letter writers who suggests that an 'All-Union Association of Invalids' should be set up independently - one is to understand - of the already existing 'Committee of War Veterans'. The association would have the job of coordinating the efforts made by various individuals or groups all over the country to put pressure on the ministries and other organizations, which could improve the life of the disabled.

That Literaturnaya gazeta should publicize and support such an initiative at all is certainly of great interest. It is, indeed, a way of acknowledging publicly the failure of the collective to cater for the various and often conflicting needs of all its members, as well as the legitimate right of those who have been neglected to unite into a pressure group. Individuals can no longer fully rely on institutions led or supervised by the Party to put things right. They must take action themselves.

Unfortunately Literaturnaya gazeta does not pursue the matter any further. Instead, it falls back on its traditional function as an 'agitator and organizer', taking the relevant authorities to task. Rather than investigating further the need for the disabled to organize independently in order to give a collective voice to their demands, the paper takes it upon itself to act as a mediator between them and central power. This is common practice in the Soviet press. The paper addresses its readers' grievances to the institutions concerned, which are obliged by the law to respond within a month. The reply, often signed by the deputy-minister or other second in command, is likely to follow this pattern: 1) We agree with the criticisms expressed in Literaturnaya gazeta and thank the editors for raising such an important issue. 2) We have already introduced such and such measures to this effect and intend to introduce others in a near future. 3) We are, however, impeded from achieving the best results by the inadequate performance of other organizations.

A large part of the discussion on disabled war veterans is, indeed, devoted to this dialogue between the paper and various high-ranking officials responding to its critics. It began four months after the publication of Zhukhovitskii's first article when Literaturnaya gazeta proudly presented its readers with long-awaited replies from three deputy-ministers as well as an apology from the head of the railway station criticized in the article in question.<sup>14</sup>

One of these letters was sent by A. Sergeev, RSFSR Deputy-Minister of Health. It characteristically follows the pattern previously described.<sup>15</sup> A. Sergeev first of all recognizes the shortcomings of the health service in dealing with war veterans, and then promises a number of imminent improvements. He pledges, in particular, that in the future every polyclinic will have a doctor especially appointed to look after them. However, there remains problems which the medical staff are unqualified to solve, such as the poor quality of artificial limbs or the insufficient quantity of places reserved for the invalids in rest homes and sanatoria.

Letters from officials were published five more times during the debate. They usually follow the publication of articles which sum up readers' further complaints, criticisms or suggestions and urge the relevant organizations to come up with solutions as soon as possible. For example, seven weeks after the publication of the article 'Two hundred more letters', six official letters appeared in the paper, including one from the USSR Minister of Trade who proposed the setting up of a delivery service for war veterans.<sup>16</sup>

The efficiency of such a system remains doubtful. Do officials promise to take measures they intended to take all along? Or is it the case that they are susceptible to bad publicity and feel they have to take positive action which, they hope, will placate nosey journalists, disgruntled members of the public and dissatisfied supervisors? The motives would not matter so much if some concrete outcome

could be safely expected. But are these new policies ever implemented? After all, circulars have to travel a long way from the minister's office in Moscow to the local authority concerned. A. Sergeev, whose letter has already been mentioned, seems to be aware that readers might not be impressed by these official announcements when he specifies that a team of representatives from his ministry and the Committee of War Veterans will check upon a series of hospitals and polyclinics.

However, in the end, regardless of the fact that the paper's investigative work is closely supervised by the Party, the problem is that a newspaper cannot keep a close watch on the performance of a particular institution indefinitely. It seems that Soviet journalists themselves were already doubtful about their ability to make a significant impact on institutions at the time. Rosemary Rogers points out that an increasing number of Soviet sociologists and journalists share the view that the press should stop wanting to be a 'corrective organ' and concentrate instead on its mission as provider of mass information.<sup>17</sup> The Soviet sociologist Verkhouskaya regrets that too many people do not consider the newspaper 'as a press organ... for which the printed word is the basic weapon for action', but as an administrative one 'possessing special authority and influence in society'.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever its immediate outcome, the debate undoubtedly contains a harsh criticism of Soviet society. It exposes a

high degree of insensitivity towards individuals with specific needs amongst both officialdom and the population at large. It also highlights these individuals' helplessness when faced with the large organizations from which they are supposed to receive assistance. Yet, except for one short reference to the need for an association of the disabled, the emphasis is very much on the inadmissible lack of awareness and inertia of organizations, as well as the inability of the economy to provide for small groups.

Some allusions to the economic aspect of the problem are made by officials in their letters, in particular by the RSFSR Deputy-Minister of Health who stresses that the disabled cannot be provided with the best medical care because good quality artificial limbs are unavailable. Several readers raise this particular issue, which is eventually examined in detail by the writer Vadim Sokolov.<sup>19</sup> Commenting upon readers' letters, Sokolov comes to the conclusion that the best way of helping the disabled is to produce comfortable and reliable artificial limbs. It is outrageous, he argues, that they should have to put up with heavy, ill-fitting appliances, usually made of wood and in constant need of repair. There is an acute shortage of adequately trained staff capable of making, repairing or fitting good artificial limbs. The truth of the matter is that enterprises are not in the least interested in manufacturing products aimed at a limited market, because small orders do not bring in the bonuses.

Furthermore Soviet factory managers are well known for their reluctance to take new ideas on board. In another issue of the paper the writer Vl. Amlinskii relates the story of a sixty-four year old man, Zalogin, who has been unable to find a manufacturer willing to produce the artificial limb he himself designed.<sup>20</sup> His model has been praised by both professionals and patients who have tried it. Yet none of the steps Zalogin has taken have been effective. In fact, his initiative has cost him his job and his flat. The City Executive Committee of Simferopol has eventually promised to help, but only after the writer and Literaturnaya gazeta intervened.

The issue is discussed again a year later in a second article by Sokolov, which is, in fact, an account of a round table organized by Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>21</sup> The participants include representatives of the Committee of War Veterans, officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence and managers of enterprises which manufacture artificial limbs.

The article begins with horrifying stories about disabled people who slipped on the snow or on stairs because of deficient artificial legs. It then sets about tackling the roots of the problem which, it is argued, lie in the bureaucratic nature of the economic system.

As manufacturers do not consult the medical staff, an even relatively well produced appliance often gives unsatisfactory results because it is not adapted to the needs

of a particular individual. This lack of coordination between industry and the medical profession is not only due to an economic system geared towards mass production. It also stems from a bureaucratic division of responsibilities. Orthopaedic appliances are not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, but that of the Ministry of Social Security, and ministries show little talent in coordinating their efforts. One of the participants pessimistically remarks that 'as long as this old institutional barrier exists, it is difficult to expect any progress in the field of prosthetics'. It is also suggested in the course of the debate that the only solution is to set up small workshops which would be in charge of the whole process, combining industrial and medical expertise, so that the 'element of individualization' could be preserved.

The debate on the disabled war veterans makes explicit the inability of the Soviet economy to diversify, and its resultant neglect of the specific needs of individuals. The criticism of certain economic and governmental mechanisms is undoubtedly damning. Yet contributors to the debate do not come up with radical alternatives as they would entail the total rejection of basic principles on which the Soviet economic and political structure is based. Furthermore, judging by the letter from V. V. Trofimov, RSFSR Minister of Health, which was published four months after the round table, little practical outcome is to be expected. As a matter of fact, Trofimov's reply is rather comical in the way



it so predictably follows the usual pattern: the criticisms were, indeed, justified; the following measures have already been taken, but, in the end, manufacturers have to be blamed for the low quality of artificial limbs.<sup>22</sup> We are back to square one.

This disappointing denouement certainly lends weight to the argument that the corrective function of the press is a myth. It also highlights the governing bodies' inability to come up with radical solutions. It could be argued, however, that this is precisely the message which Literaturnaya gazeta puts across, whether consciously or not. Readers must be credited with the ability to put two and two together, and the juxtaposition of critical articles and conformist official responses to them is likely to undermine the authority of the regime.

Contributors to the debate repeatedly infer that the present regime is in some way incapable of adequately catering for the needs of individuals. The discussion which began with the outraged account of a disabled man's predicament in a railway station turned into a critical analysis of the country's economic and administrative structure. To sum up, the message is that individuals suffer from the inability of the economy to diversify and modernize rapidly as well as from the inertia of ministries and other organizations. It is also implied that people are deprived of any efficient and independent means of articulating their demands, and therefore cannot easily raise public awareness

of their specific needs. The debate clearly establishes links between the ethical, socio-economic and to some extent political dimensions of the issue.

### 3. 'Little Stalins' and Individualists

It has already been noted that the debate on bad manners highlights inconsiderate behaviour mainly on the part of men and women in the course of their professional duties. Some articles, however, take the issue one step further by establishing a link between offensive behaviour and abuse of power.

The issue was discussed at length during the round table, an account of which was published under the title 'On Human Dignity'.<sup>23</sup> A reader's letter serves as an introduction to illustrate the problem.<sup>24</sup> T. Minchukova, from Minsk, recounts how an inspector accused her of not paying her trolleybus fare when she was, in fact, looking for the right change. Not only was the inspector extremely rude and vulgar, but she also threatened to exhibit Minchukova's photo in the trolleybus, which is the form of public humiliation reserved for professional fare-dodgers. Finally, irritated by Minchukova's determination to stand up for herself, the inspector took her to the police station. The police and the head of the trolleybus station willingly defused the situation and assured Minchukova that they believed in her innocence. Yet, although they had promised that the inspector would be reprimanded, Minchukova

subsequently received a letter from the station authorities stating that she had been in the wrong after all. Minchukova is outraged that the authorities should have taken sides with the inspector whose priority was clearly to show off her power rather than to enforce the law. Inspectors have, indeed, the right to fine passengers for not paying their fares, Minchukova argues, but 'there is not a law which gives them the right to be offensive'.

Numerous similar examples are quoted during the debate.<sup>25</sup> Criticisms are levelled at various services and administrations, where the general public has no alternative but to hope for the staff's goodwill. Unfortunately, as a participant points out when recalling how rude and unhelpful post office employees can be, too many people 'feel that as soon as someone depends on [them], everything is allowed'.

Referring back to Minchukova's story nearly a year after the round table, Vl. Amlinskii paints a rather bleak picture of Soviet society with a detectable Orwellian note, as shown in the extract from his article:

... Everyone in life has met his 'inspector'. That is to say, someone who sees it as his job to distrust you, who is suspicious of every step you take and who will trample your dignity at every available opportunity. Someone who thinks that he is not here for your benefit, but that you are here for his. He can come in many guises: he can be the shop assistant who utters the ritual phrase: 'There're a lot of you, but I'm on my own'; or the control officer at the airport who tells you coldly and indifferently: 'I don't know... the flight has been cancelled... I'm not sure...' <sup>26</sup>

The debate certainly contains a number of far-reaching observations, yet lacks a sense of direction. Some participants focus on the reprehensible behaviour of employees while others attempt to examine the objective conditions which make misuse of power possible. This diversity of approaches gives us an insight into the manifold aspects of the issue. At the same time the paper stops short of making an explicit distinction between causes and effects, thus throwing the blame on both individuals and the system.

At first, most comments assume a moralizing character and refer exclusively to low-ranking employees who deal directly with the general public. It is justly argued that Soviet citizens are weary of being bullied or ignored. However, it is unfortunate that no one cares to look at working conditions in the consumer services. Was the control officer at the airport in a position to pass on the necessary information? How are we to interpret Aleksandr Kron's indignation at the shop assistant who tried to stop him from buying an imported suit because she wished to keep it for 'a friend'? The anecdote may simply reinforce readers' low opinion of shop assistants who use their position to dabble in a bit of illicit trading, rather than invite a calling into question of the economic system.

Vl. Amlinskii concludes his 1971 article by arguing briefly that the problems require 'a business-like, governmental and economic approach'.<sup>27</sup> However, unlike contributors to the debate on disabled war veterans,

participants in the round table carefully leave economics aside, merely attacking the large institutions for their inadequate performance. Airports are criticized for their low degree of 'professionalism' which leads to a 'lack of respect for people'. It is also suggested that the transport organizations should simplify their system of fares, possibly by introducing a single travel card for several types of transport. All agree that the media have a duty to publicize these matters. 'Silence means consent', and after all, the press has shown that it can successfully bring pressure to bear on institutions to improve their performance. For example, hotel regulations were modified after Literaturnaya gazeta reported the case of an elderly professor who died of a heart attack shortly after he was forced out of his hotel room at 1.00 in the morning. His room had been allocated to an unexpected foreign visitor.

So, in the end, no one proposes radical economic and political measures which would compel the big organizations to change their practices and improve the work of their employees. The interest of the debate lies elsewhere. All the contributions highlight the fact that the existing - supposedly socialist - socio-economic system has produced a set of values which run counter to the collectivist philosophy, namely individualism and authoritarianism. Although the debate concentrates on the services and employees who do not hold high positions of power, contributors occasionally make generalizations, hinting that

these values have permeated the whole of society. Amlinskii, in particular, outspokenly reflects upon mundane manifestations of tyrannical behaviour. Some people, he argues, cannot be trusted with any degree of authority as they will use it primarily as a 'means of asserting themselves'. As there is nothing to stop them from doing so, the tension keeps escalating. The offended party works off his frustrations on someone else, who will work off his frustrations on someone else and so on, thus creating a 'dangerous chain reaction of rudeness, boorishness and humiliation'.

This is hardly the description of a happy collective. Individualism and authoritarianism are thriving in a society crippled by shortages and bureaucratic structures. It may be regrettable that Literaturnaya gazeta should have chosen to concentrate on abuse of power at a low level. On the other hand the debate highlights the existence of entrenched authoritarian attitudes amongst all layers of the population regardless of their position in the political hierarchy. An undemocratic political structure engenders an undemocratic culture which manifests itself in all areas of life, thus debasing human relations between individuals. Participants in the debate do not go so far as to draw such conclusions, but their observations and arguments certainly point in that direction.

#### 4. Victimization of the Individual by the Collective

A number of authors are anxious to point out that individualism and authoritarianism are not solely to be observed in separate individuals. Such behaviour can influence the life of a whole collective either because it is dominated by an unprincipled individual, or because the majority of its members close ranks to defend their own 'selfish' interests. Whatever the circumstances may be, it is often the case that moral norms alien to the officially sanctioned doctrine of collectivism meet in practice with the tacit approval of the collective.

Nataliya Il'ina is one of the few contributors to Literaturnaya gazeta who openly writes about the harassment of the individual by the collective. In an article published in 1968 Il'ina discusses the case of two women, a medical doctor and a school teacher, who were demoted overnight.<sup>28</sup> The doctor was suddenly declared professionally incompetent because she had had the misfortune to take sides with a nurse who had antagonized the consultant's wife. The teacher was criticized for not having completed her degree, a fact which the head of the school had so far chosen to overlook as she was renowned for her excellent teaching abilities. Yet the head decided that it was time to enhance the academic prestige of the school and, as a result, did not hesitate to sacrifice this talented teacher's career. Il'ina clearly rejects the notion that the interests of the school might have been above those of the teacher.

Il'ina is less concerned with the fact that the head of the school and the consultant felt that they could misuse their authority with impunity than with the means by which they achieved their aims. In the conclusion of her article she expresses her indignation at people whose praises and criticisms do not reflect their genuine opinion of a person, but simply constitute a means of manipulating her; they publicly praise those they need, they publicly criticize those they want out of their way. Il'ina does not express her argument in political terms, yet all readers will understand the reference to the old Stalinist method; shock-workers knew their portraits would not be hanging for ever.

Ironically, Il'ina's article shows that the idea of the supremacy of the collective over the individual has retained all its power. The people who demoted the two women had to justify their actions in terms which were acceptable for the collective. On the other hand, although Il'ina does not specify whether the women appealed against the decisions or not, we are left with the impression that an individual who has been blackened by, or in the name of, the collective will not find it easy to fight back. After all, the collective is always right. At the same time, the article clearly suggests that Stalinist practices have perverted and discredited the very concept of collectivism by using the collective as a means of controlling, manipulating and oppressing the individual.



It is not only those in authority who can ruin the lives of individuals by dressing up their own selfish schemes as measures aimed at protecting the interests of the collective. Il'ina also harshly criticizes those do-gooders who take it upon themselves to defend what they assume to be the moral code of the collective, thus claiming to act on its behalf and for its sake.

In an article published in 1967 Il'ina tells the story of a woman whose reputation had been considerably damaged by three elderly men who kept harassing her in various ways.<sup>29</sup> They sent the authorities and the press several letters in which they accused her of the worst felonies, including wearing ear-rings and murdering her first husband, showing the same degree of indignation whatever the 'crime'. It is hinted that the men might have had their eyes on the woman's 'living space', although the harassment did not stop when they moved into the other rooms of the flat. However, Il'ina is not so much interested in exploring the motives of their actions as in exposing the means which they use to discredit their victim.

And Il'ina does not mince her words, arguing bluntly that these supposedly honourable senior citizens who are very much involved in 'public work' - one of them used to be deputy chairman of a comrades' court - are, in fact, self-righteous petty-minded busybodies, who cannot tell the difference between idle gossip and well founded accusations. Whether they believe what they say is beside the point. What

is worrying is that they should view informing - an activity greatly encouraged under Stalin - as an acceptable way of settling scores or, should they be honest crusaders for justice, of regulating social behaviour.

Even more importantly, Il'ina objects to the fact that these people should receive official recognition, and hence power, by becoming 'public workers', whereas they are in fact self-appointed guardians of society who make people's lives a misery. Not only is Il'ina attacking yet another remnant of Stalinist practices, - although the word of 'Stalinism' is nowhere to be found -, she also casts doubt on the supposedly noble nature of 'public work'.

The comrades' court is presented by several contributors as the favourite platform of these devoted 'public workers' eager to defend the collectivist morality. A product of the Revolution - they were first introduced to strengthen discipline in the Red Army - comrades' courts fell into disuse in the mid-thirties as the criminal courts were called upon to deal with the most minor offences, and extremely harshly withal. They were revived by Khrushchev as a means of increasing popular participation in public affairs and enhancing Soviet citizens' 'feeling of collectivism'.<sup>30</sup>

Western observers have reacted to this institution in different ways. Johnson remarks that comrades' courts have relieved professional tribunals of the job of dealing with petty conflicts that occur in work and housing collectives.<sup>31</sup> The American journalist G. Feifer, who attended a number of

comrades' court sessions in the early sixties, did not think that they were 'an absurd alternative', vehemently rejecting the argument that they constitute yet another totalitarian instrument:

Some Western specialists consider institutions like the Comradely Courts the nth degree of totalitarianism, since everyone becomes Big Brother - the neighbors, the fellow workers, the comrades; all brother's keepers...Yes, but - That is not the way it works; that is not the way Russians act... The deep sense of community and of *belonging* - to the Russian earth, to the Russian people, to *Rossiya*, and to smaller divisions like the 'collective' and the family - that Russians enjoy does not bring with it eagerness to spy on others or intolerance of individual habits.<sup>32</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta does not paint such a rosy picture of collectivism. Several contributions point to the atmosphere of suspicion and acrimony that stifles many a collective. Anonymous letters blackening colleagues or neighbours are still taken seriously by managers and 'public workers' who demand that the persons discredited prove their innocence.<sup>33</sup> The practice is still alive and kicking because, as L. Zhukhovitskii sadly remarks, 'in social life, when you have been accused, it often means that you are already considered guilty!'<sup>34</sup> Echoing Il'ina's previously mentioned piece, an article focusing on comrades' courts criticizes 'public workers', - who often are 'well-intentioned pensioners' -, for their 'lack of tact', 'vulgarity' and 'shameless interference in other people's lives'; that fewer and fewer complaints are being made to these courts indicates

the general public's declining faith in their ability to dispense justice.<sup>35</sup>

While Il'ina discusses cases where individuals have been the victims of supposedly collective decisions which, in fact, did not truly reflect the views of the majority, Aleksandr Borin goes one step further, showing that the individual can be unfairly treated as a result of a decision supported by the majority of the collective.

In an article entitled 'Memory' Borin relates the story of an accountant who worked thirty-one years for the firm 'Mednabor' in Moscow and lived throughout in two damp rooms with her mother and daughter.<sup>36</sup> She was granted a flat for herself and her relatives only a few days before she died. The chairperson of the factory committee then decided that the flat should be reallocated to another employee on the grounds that the accountant's relatives had never worked for the firm themselves. Shocked by such a mean decision, the secretary of the factory party organization, together with a number of workers, demanded that a vote should be taken. Thirty-two employees voted against the chairperson's proposal, thirty-six supported it. The author argues that, although the decision had eventually been taken through the democratic process, it was still the wrong one because it was an expression of people's jealousy. Many could not accept that a young girl should enjoy good living conditions so early in life while they were still waiting for new flats. Not everything, Borin adds, can be blamed on the housing

shortage as this particular firm has already built many flats for its employees and continues to do so. At that point he embarks upon a very interesting reflection on the democratic process:

The collective is, of course, a lofty and noble concept. Yet a single specific collective is also a living organism, which can be wrong, make mistakes, be unfair, grow, mature... Where, I wonder, is this golden mean, this precise, reliable mechanism which enables a democratic majority to express itself by voting and which can also stop evil, intellectual blindness and immorality if for some reason voters are, at that moment, incapable of being rational and fair?<sup>37</sup>

This is a remarkable statement if only because the case of injustice which has been reported hardly justifies such harsh words. If it was not for the unfortunate timing of the decision taken by the factory committee, it could have been argued, after all, that it was the responsibility of the city committee to provide the young girl and her grandmother with adequate accommodation. However, Soviet journalists frequently use a specific case as a pretext for holding forth on a broader issue. Borin's observation obviously does not concern the 'Mednabor' factory only, but refers to the nature of the democratic process in general as well as the history and the political system of the Soviet Union. Words like 'evil', 'intellectual blindness' and 'immorality' would certainly be more appropriate for describing the activities of all these 'collectives' under Stalin who, blinded by fear or fanaticism, sent some of their members to their deaths by

unanimously and 'democratically' accusing them of betrayal. Borin is anxious to point out that decisions are not democratic only because they have been taken by the majority. The majority can be wrong and therefore it is essential that the collective should be obliged to obey certain principles so that the rights of the individual in particular should be protected.

#### 5. The Individual's Evasion of His Responsibilities

Il'ina does not only criticize people who use the collective as a way of pursuing their own interests. She blames her compatriots for letting them get away with it. Too afraid of being at loggerheads with what is presented as the will of the collective, individuals seem to have lost their ability to express their opinions. Thus they will not go to the rescue of a colleague who has been unfairly treated in their name, so to speak; neither will they openly criticize those responsible for the injustice.

In an article published in 1967 Il'ina gives some examples of situations where individuals have refrained from publicly voicing their disapproval: a woman is shocked at seeing her friend happily shaking hands with a man well-known for giving and taking bribes, although her friend does not approve of such practices; a woman disparagingly speaks to her friends about a neighbour who has obtained her flat through a bit of string-pulling, but welcomes her with open arms when she comes to borrow a mixer.<sup>38</sup> Il'ina sees such

hypocritical behaviour as a sign of cowardice, the refusal of the individual to take sides and responsibility for what happens in society. To 'brand someone in a meeting', - she argues -, 'when feeling the support of the others is one thing. To fight with baseness (podlost) face to face is another'. And she entreats her fellow citizens to ostracize corrupt people whose behaviour they have so far condemned only in private.

Il'ina's tone might appear somewhat self-righteous and her advice lacking in practicality. It could be argued, after all, that some attempt should be made to distinguish between systematic large-scale corruption and mere resourcefulness, however difficult that might be in a society crippled by shortages and bureaucracy. However, her argument highlights the existence of double standards and the division of the self. The public persona is a sham which feels that it has to protect the private self by keeping silent or following the pack. This phenomenon of split personalities has far-reaching consequences for the development of society. Soviet citizens, Il'ina argues, have surrendered their right to make judgements to the law-enforcing agencies, in particular the police and the courts, or the press. She continues with vehement rhetorical questions:

Isn't it the case that many of us  
strive, even if only unconsciously, to  
attribute moral norms to agencies of  
government? That people have lost the  
habit of being guided solely by their  
own conscience when making judgements?  
Isn't it the case that they want others  
to decide, and if it is deemed

necessary, condemn on their behalf? And if they do not condemn, what can I do about it anyway?<sup>39</sup>

As a result two basic types of social behaviour can be observed. Some citizens do their utmost to avoid participating in the life of the collective, passively accepting the decisions taken in its name and those made by various social agencies. Il'ina obviously sees great danger in this lack of civic responsibility as she drops broad hints about the failure of law-enforcing agencies to do their job properly. After all, the examples she gives show that some people take bribes or jump the queue with impunity.

The other side of the coin is that people have become indifferent to their fellow citizens. In an article published in 1971 V. Kardin lists a whole series of offences, which, he believes, have occurred partly as a result of people's indifference to what happens in their community.<sup>40</sup> He concentrates in particular on the case of a sixty-two-year-old pensioner beaten to death by two young lads under the influence of alcohol. Kardin argues that not only the two lads, but the whole community is guilty. People are to be blamed for not publicly objecting to the illegal sale of wine in their health food shop; the chap who bought the pensioner's watch from the lads for not enquiring about its origins; the old man's neighbours for choosing not to notice the blood on his body and letting him lie in the corridor for several hours. People do not want to 'meddle'.



Il'ina's article, in particular, received a very big response from readers. While agreeing with her basic argument, many of them refuted her claims that they were cowards. It is, indeed, a well-known fact that those who speak the truth, those who 'meddle' do get into trouble. Il'ina replies somewhat unconvincingly that one must follow the dictates of one's conscience whatever the difficulties, because in the end the truth will prevail.<sup>41</sup> By examining the problem from a moral angle only, Il'ina ends up burdening the individual with an immense, superhuman task. On the other hand, she forcibly attacks collectivism, or at least the form it has taken in her country, showing that it has produced passive citizens, reluctant to make any public judgement on what happens around them.

While some citizens have withdrawn from public life into the privacy of their homes, others go to the other extreme, appealing to the collective for help whenever they have personal problems. The issue was also tackled by Evgenii Dobrovol'skii nearly a year after the publication of Il'ina's article, but this time in a humorous way.<sup>42</sup> A woman demanded that her friend, who was having an affair with her husband, should be judged and punished by their work collective. The quarrel grew even more acrimonious and the local authorities (mestkom) were asked to intervene. Dobrovol'skii finds it preposterous that two adults should make an exhibition of themselves and ask the collective or the authorities to sort out their private lives. The offended party claimed that the

'defence of the family' was at stake, whereas, Dobrovol'skii comments,

it was clear from the very beginning that it was merely about two forceful women (teten'ki) settling scores. But why is it that a whole institution had to be drawn into this? Meetings took place. Minutes were typed. What for?<sup>43</sup>

Il'ina is not so much concerned with the time wasted by the police, the courts or other public bodies, as with these people's inability to 'distinguish between violation of legal norms and violations of ethical norms'. She sees this attitude as yet another way of evading one's personal responsibilities by relying on public organizations to solve private problems.

The discussion emphasizes the need to redefine the notion of privacy and the relationship between the private and public spheres. The idea of the supremacy of the collective over the individual has regrettably resulted either in an unacceptable intrusion on people's privacy or in the crippling belief that the individual cannot influence the collective. Consequently, whether it is the factory or the city committee, or - the reader may surmise - the central authorities, the representatives of the collective have been entrusted with an excessive degree of power, which, in the end, runs counter to the interests of the individual. The collective will stop becoming oppressive only when individuals will again assume their personal responsibilities both in the private and the public spheres.

## 5. Conclusion

The debates which have been examined in this chapter tackle a variety of issues, all of which paint an unflattering picture of the collective as an oppressive unit which stifles and often harms the individual. Articles which sing the praises of collectives are occasionally published in Literaturnaya gazeta, but usually appear in the economic section of the paper, whether they publicize the outstanding performance of a specific work collective or the economic progress of a relatively backward region. No vindication of collectivism is to be found in the sections devoted to ethical issues and the relationship between the collective and the individual. Firstly, we shall sum up the main ideas which considerably undermine the official theory of collectivism either explicitly or implicitly in these articles. We shall then examine the limitations of the debates.

### A. Criticism of Collectivism

1. While the values traditionally forming the basis of collectivism, - i.e. patriotism, love of work and social duty -, are not to be forsaken, their limitations must be acknowledged. Indeed, these notions concern only one aspect of the relationship between the individual and the collective, emphasizing the duties of the citizens to the collective, rather than their rights. Soviet society needs to reassess its moral code and ensure that the 'dignity and honour' of the individual be protected.

2. Soviet society is depicted as a divided collective, riddled with individualism, suspicion and petty authoritarianism. The lofty goals which official propaganda never tires of promoting have failed to bind the Soviet community together. Individuals do not seem to share any common ideals. They have withdrawn into themselves, protecting their own interests. Ironically, the society which was intended to be a model of collectivism, has become a dangerously atomized community where the notion of civic responsibility has lost its meaning in the eyes of too many of its members.

3. The notion of the collective has not been abandoned, but perverted and discredited by those who use it to pursue their own selfish interests. Injustices are constantly being committed in the name of the collective.

4. A decision democratically taken by the collective can be undemocratic if it does not obey certain principles aimed at protecting the interests and rights of the individual. Indirectly, the reader is encouraged to reflect upon the very nature of collectivism: what are the interests of the collective? Are they always to be placed above those of the individual? Are there any contradictions between the interests of various collectives, or do they harmonize with the interests of the supreme collective, i.e. the whole nation?

5. There is a need to redefine the limits of the private and public spheres. Too much power has been entrusted to the

collective; as a result, people's privacy can be intruded upon at any time, and individuals tend to evade their personal responsibilities either in their private or public lives.

6. The inadequacies of the collective are not described as remnants of capitalism. For example, it is clearly pointed out, that the inability of the centralized economy to diversify, along with the bureaucratic system of management, contribute to the neglect of the individual. Furthermore, the debate on bad manners is permeated with nostalgia for pre-revolutionary mores.

#### B. Limitations of the Debates

1. While the link between the nature of the socio-economic system and the neglect of the individual is clearly established, little emphasis is put on the bad living and working conditions which push people into individualistic behaviour. Brief references are made to shortages of goods and inadequate housing. At the same time, it is frequently hinted that people should behave better in spite of these hardships. Authors do not dwell upon these problems. It is as if they assumed that the Soviet economy was anyway incapable of solving them in a near future.

2. There is not a single article which investigates the history of the country and the economic and political upheavals which have destroyed the social fabric, making people suspicious of one another and thus to withdraw into the privacy of their homes. Only by reading between the lines

can we find some veiled references to Stalinism. Nowhere is there any mention of the repressive organs which largely contributed to the breaking up of the collective.

3. Neither is there any analysis of social inequalities, which have also contributed to the creation of disharmony in the collective, although there are some allusions to the importance of social status, as well as to inequalities resulting from bribery and corruption. Specific examples of abuse of power refer to low-ranking employees only.

4. It could be argued that these limitations stem from the fact that the debates belong to the section of the paper devoted to 'ethical issues'. However, 'ethical issues' are never discussed in purely moral terms. Although there is some vagueness as to what extent ordinary citizens should be held responsible for the inadequacies of the collective, contributors constantly search for explanations of people's behaviour in the organization of society.

While the economic system is openly and frequently criticized, it is clear that political debates have remained taboo. As a result, a whole series of problems which are fundamentally political, such as the nature of democracy or the relationship between the private and the political (or the 'public'), are not examined in strictly political terms. The vagueness of the terminology is both helpful and restrictive. It allows authors to touch upon some highly controversial issues, yet it stops them from making any sophisticated analysis of the political mechanisms; nor

can they direct specific criticisms at the leadership. The term 'collective' itself lacks precision; it can refer to the work team or the residents of a block of flats, as well as to various party and governmental bodies supposedly representing collective interests, or society at large.

Finally, the lack of positive suggestions is striking. As a rule, authors do not put forward any radical alternatives or any concrete solutions which would reduce the ubiquitous power of the collective or that of large organizations. Thus, the overall picture of Soviet society seems rather bleak.

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2. The 'ty' form is the familiar form of address.
3. N. Voinovich, '"Ty" i "Vy"', LG, 1967, No.14, p.13.
4. B. Volodin, 'Chitaya pis'ma - Vsego lish' o delikatnosti', LG, 1968, No.13, p.12.
5. Vl. Amlinskii, 'Ustupite mesto vezhlivosti', LG, 1971, No.23, p.11.
6. V. Varzhapetyan, 'Pravo na uvazhenie', LG, 1968, No. 41, p.13.
7. A. Protapopova, 'Vse-taki glavnoe - dukh vremeni', LG, 1967, No.7, p.11.
8. See letter from B. Bazhanov, LG, 1967, No.6, p.12.
9. See round table, 'O chelovecheskom dostoinstve', LG, 1970, No.37, p.13.
10. There is a very interesting section on 'the hierarchy of human virtues' in Soviet ideology in Shlapentokh, Soviet Public Opinion and Ideology, New York: Praeger, 1986, pp.21-3: 'hatred' features among the 'most desirable qualities' (when it is directed against the 'enemies of mankind' and 'imperialism'); 'honesty' was hardly discussed until Andropov and Gorbachev rehabilitated the concept in the mid-eighties.
11. S. Mikhalkov, 'Etiket - Khorosho eto ili plokho?', LG, 1967, No.20, p.13.
12. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Invalid', LG, 1968, No.14, p.12.
13. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Sto pisem o invalide', LG, No.23, p.11.
14. See letters, LG, 1968, No.19, p.11.
15. A. Sergeev, 'Mediki odobryayut, mediki predlagayut', LG, 1968, No.19, p.11.
16. See letters, LG, 1968, No.33, p.10 and LG, 1968, No.40, pp.12-13.
17. R. Rogers, Media Receptivity in the USSR, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Center for International Studies, Institute of Technology, 1973, p.67.
18. Ibid. p.58.
19. V. Sokolov, LG, 1968, No.37, p.12.
20. Vl. Amlinskii, LG, 1968, No.46, p.12.
21. V. Sokolov, LG, 1969, No.36, pp.10-11.
22. V. V. Trofimov, LG, 1969, No.52, p.11.
23. See round table, 'O chelovecheskom dostoinstve', LG, 1970, No.37, p.13.
24. Letter from T. Minchukova, 'Kto dal pravo?', LG, 1970, No.37, p.13.
25. See also: L. Likhodeev, 'Ushi za 4 kopeiki', LG, 1971, No.29, p.12, about an elderly woman who did not have the change to pay her trolleybus fare and was given the 'hare treatment' by two smug young ticket collectors. (See the Russian expression 'ekhat' zaitsem', which literally means 'to travel like a hare', i.e., without a ticket; the culprits have their photos, adorned with the animal's ears, together



with their names and addresses, exhibited in the vehicle where they have been caught.) Likhodeev condemns this 'barbaric' practice.

26. Vl. Amlinskii, LG, 1971, No.23, p.11.

27. Ibid.

28. N. Il'ina, 'Sud'ba igraet chelovekom...', LG, 1968, No.26, p.10.

29. N. Il'ina, 'Strashnee pistoleta', LG, 1967, No.16, p.12.

30. See extract from article 1 of the 1961 RSFSR Statute on Comrades' Courts in H. J. Berman, Justice in the USSR - An Interpretation of Soviet Law, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963, p.289.

31. E. L. Johnson, An Introduction to the Soviet Legal System, London: Methuen, 1969, p.59.

32. G. Feifer, Justice in Moscow, London: The Bodley Head, 1964, pp.128-9.

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34. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Poka vina ne dokazana', LG, 1967, No.47, p.10.

35. S. Bondarin & O. Chernyi, 'Vospitanie sovesti', LG, 1967, No.4, p.11; the cruelty of comrades' courts has also been tackled in fiction; see, for example, Natal'ya Baranskaya's short novel, Lyubka, in the volume entitled Otritsatel'naya Zhizhel', Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1977.

36. A. Borin, 'Pamyat'', LG, 1971, No.22, p.12.

37. Ibid.

38. N. Il'ina, 'A esli ne podat' ruki...', LG, 1967, No.46, p.12.

39. Ibid.

40. V. Kardin, 'Mera souchastiya', LG, 1971, No.35, p.12.

41. N. Il'ina, 'Razve est' retsepty?', LG, 1968, No.6, p.12.

42. E. Dobrovol'skii, '"Amoralochka" - fel'eton', LG, 1968, No.41, p.13.

43. Ibid.

#### IV. ACADEMICS AND THE THEORY OF COLLECTIVISM

As a rule, academics did not participate in the debates on the relationship between the collective and the individual already examined. Most of the contributions were made by journalists, writers, officials, and readers commenting upon human interest stories. It has been shown that these articles and letters contain valuable information on Soviet social reality and Soviet people's perceptions of it. Harsh criticisms are levelled at the forms which collectivism has taken in practice. There is, however, a series of quite different articles - approximately 35,000 words in all - in which academics specializing in various human sciences challenge the very theory of collectivism. Seven of these articles are directly concerned with the theory itself. The other twenty or so constitute a lengthy debate on the need to develop a science of Man (chelovek). The study of Man has been neglected for years, partly as a result of the priority given to the collective over the individual, and the illusory assumption that individuals will not enter into conflicts with one another or with the group. The all-round study of Man which is felt to be urgently needed by these academics, would involve - in particular, but not exclusively - the development of psychology.

##### 1. Collectivism: An Inadequate Theory

The theory of collectivism is openly rejected by V.

Sukhomlinskii, member-correspondent of the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, introduced by Literaturnaya gazeta as 'one of the most senior pedagogues' in the land, i.e., we are to understand, a highly commendable specialist whose ideas should be heard with the greatest respect.

In an article revealingly entitled 'It is the individual I see', Sukhomlinskii insists that it is as vital to study the impact of the collective upon the individual as it is to define the role of the individual within the collective - he speaks of the 'mutual relationship' between the group and each of its members.<sup>1</sup> He then questions two basic principles of collectivism which have been hammered into Soviet teachers' heads for decades.

Firstly, Sukhomlinskii deems the idea that 'the collective is the main educator of the personality' to be oversimplistic. As a matter of fact, he argues, a whole series of factors and social agencies contribute to the shaping of a child's personality, including the family, books, peers, teachers (who are not all alike), as well as a growing sense of self-awareness which commonly - and quite normally - expresses itself by a desire to change what has been done by one's elders. This is hardly an original idea. Western readers would probably think that Sukhomlinskii is only stating the obvious. And of course he is. Soviet academics have been straitjacketed by incredibly primitive dogmas incapable of accommodating reality; hence the need to rediscover some basic concepts taken for granted by

researchers, or even the general public, in societies where the progress of sciences has not been cramped by state ideology. Sukhomlinskii also stresses the importance of subjective factors in the shaping of an individual and legitimizes the rebellious spirit of the young.

Secondly, Sukhomlinskii vehemently revolts against the other, equally famous, collectivist motto, i.e., 'the collective is the first aim of education', arguing that as a result of this erroneous belief the individual has practically become invisible. To support his argument, Sukhomlinskii gives examples of cruel practices which have been introduced in the name of collectivism, such as, for instance, demanding that a child should discuss his or her misbehaviour in front of the collective. Such practice should be condemned not only because it unnecessarily humiliates children, but also because collectives usually show little compassion and understanding, thus failing to teach children tolerance.

Sukhomlinskii elaborates on his thesis in a second article which appeared in Literaturnaya gazeta three years later.<sup>2</sup> Drawing further lessons from his long teaching career, Sukhomlinskii humbly recognizes that all his attempts at organizing his school into a collective unfailingly resulted in what he calls 'the collective for the sake of the collective', with a 'strong leadership' on one hand and 'submissive' children on the other.

The strength of his argument stems from both the honesty with which he takes stock of his own professional activity and his unequivocal criticism of Makarenko. While claiming to have retained a great admiration for the father of Soviet pedagogy, Sukhomlinskii urges readers to re-examine his theories with circumspection. He bluntly declares that Makarenko was undoubtedly wrong on one particular point, which, in fact, as O'Dell reminds us, is one of the fundamental principles of collectivism. In the event of a conflict between the collective and the individual, Sukhomlinskii argues, the interests of the collective should not necessarily prevail. Makarenko's advocacy of the supremacy of the collective over the individual can have disastrous effects as, indeed, Sukhomlinskii clearly explains in this extract from his article:

Such an attitude on the part of the pedagogue can only break the will of the growing individual, and I would like to think that nowadays only very few teachers adopt it in their teaching practice.<sup>3</sup>

Sukhomlinskii traces back this method to the thirties when 'one somehow stopped seeing the child, the individual behind the collective'. The practice of public confessions has 'transformed public opinion into a means of punishing the child', thus producing passive and withdrawn individuals, afraid of the collective:

How shortsighted we are when we try to get a formal condemnation, for show, of a comrade by the collective! As a result he will be eaten away from within by the most terrible of curses - hypocrisy.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Sukhomlinskii reverses Makarenko's formula. 'I am deeply convinced', he writes, 'that the aim of communist education is the individual while the collective is only the means to achieve this aim', assuming that the collective does not set about crushing the individual as it is still often the case, he is sorry to say, in schools nowadays.

Sukhomlinskii's writings seem to have provided a rallying point for liberal members of the teaching profession and specialists in pedagogy who wish to challenge the ideological monopoly of Makarenko. In fact, several contributors to the debate point out that Makarenko's ideas have been distorted by official ideologists and that many practices reputed to stem from his ideas must be making the master turn in his grave. For instance, Lyubov' Kabo whose principal goal, in her article, is to warn against the danger of relying upon one single dogma, mentions the discrepancy between Makarenko's theories and their application in Soviet schools:

What would Makarenko have said if he had visited a school in the forties or fifties, a school where ... everyone speaks of independence for the children while not a single pioneers' meeting can take place without the teachers.<sup>5</sup>

Yu. Azarov, a senior researcher at the Academy of pedagogical sciences, describes what is practised in Soviet schools as 'vulgar collectivism'. Whereas the educator should take a back seat and encourage the children to organize their own lives and settle conflicts between themselves, 'in

practice', he argues, 'the teacher alone manages the entire life of the children'. Like Sukhomlinskii, Azarov is concerned about the disastrous consequences of such authoritarian methods on the personality of the child, who tends to become increasingly afraid of taking any initiatives. He advocates a return to genuine self-management amongst children to help them grow into confident and creative adults. He advises, however, to handle the concept of self-management with caution as it does not necessarily lead to democracy. Left to their own devices, children can easily reproduce hierarchical structures with the elder dominating the younger or the stronger harassing the weaker.<sup>6</sup>

A. Levshin vehemently defends Sukhomlinskii against one of his opponents, B. Likhachev, who has written a very hostile review of his book Etyudy o kommunisticheskom vospitanii in the professional journal Uchitel'skaya gazeta. Levshin argues that contrary to what Likhachev thinks, Sukhomlinskii does not forsake the idea of collectivism, but rightly advocates a 'harmonious fusion' between the interests of the collective and those of the individual. It is Likhachev who betrays the ideas of Makarenko by overlooking the fact that children are not only objects, but also subjects. In no circumstances should the collective be used as a means of stifling the individual.<sup>7</sup>

Sukhomlinskii's argument in favour of a liberal educational environment conducive to the full development of the individual chimes in with the main criticisms frequently

levelled at Soviet pedagogy in the more specific debate on teaching methods. Educationalists repeatedly argue that teachers ought to be equipped with some grounding in psychology in order to be able to vary their approach in accordance with the specific needs of each child. Schools are harshly criticized for their tendency to cram pupils' heads with ever more knowledge, deterring the children from being inquisitive and expressing their views. Nor do institutions of higher education make much effort to develop their students' creative potential and ability to take initiatives. It is further argued that the failure to encourage independent and critical thinking among the young partly accounts for the intellectual apathy which can often be observed in academia and research institutes.<sup>8</sup>

Sukhomlinskii's articles also echo Il'ina's and Borin's concerns about the victimization of the individual by the collective. As a matter of fact, they complete the picture painted by the above mentioned authors insofar as they relate the patterns of behaviour which Il'ina and Borin have observed in adults to the type of education that children receive in schools. From early childhood Soviet citizens are faced with oppressive collectives which make them acutely aware of their vulnerability as individuals. Later on the children's collective is replaced by various adult versions of it, such as the work or tenants' collective, each having its own mechanisms to keep the individual in check, for example by means of the comrades' court.



Sukhomlinskii's observation that children's way of coping with pressures from the collective is often to withdraw into themselves, thus becoming passive members of society, coincides with Il'ina's own conclusions. Like Il'ina too, Sukhomlinskii presents these practices as a product of the Stalin period, to which he discreetly refers as 'the thirties'. Sukhomlinskii's original contribution to the debate is to denounce the system of thought which has generated and legitimized this type of social relations. The official theory of collectivism is wrong.

Over the years 1967-1971 Literaturnaya gazeta published only a few articles which contain a systematic criticism of the theory of collectivism. However, in 1967, the paper presented its readers with an account of a philosophy conference which clearly indicates that such a debate was actually taking place amongst academics in various disciplines, particularly pedagogy, philosophy and psychology.<sup>9</sup> The conference was organized in September 1967 by the philosophy faculty of Tambov Pedagogical Institute on the theme 'Marxist-Leninist ethics'. Several contributors, we are told, presented papers discussing the relationship between the individual and the collective, and this is precisely the subject which R. Petropavlovskii, a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the RSFSR Academy of Sciences, decided to concentrate upon in his report for Literaturnaya gazeta.

Having briefly pointed out that most participants supported the well-known thesis according to which 'communist morality demands the subordination of the interest of the individual to that of society', Petropavlovskii embarks upon a lengthy account of a much less conformist position defended by a few individuals only and expounded by T. V. Samsonova, a reader from Moscow University. Samsonova calls upon The German Ideology to demonstrate that it has never been the goal of communists to subordinate the interests of a particular (chastnyi) individual to those of a mythical universal (vseobshchyi) one; the 'common interest' ought to be the outcome of a consensus between concrete individuals. Samsonova concludes that

... from a theoretical point of view it is incorrect to want to solve contradictions between the private and the public by establishing a moral norm subordinating the former to the latter; ... it would be more fruitful to speak of unity rather than subordination and then to look for the right concrete mechanism to realize this unity in various situations.<sup>10</sup>

Samsonova champions the cause of the individual, but also lays a great deal of emphasis on the idea of unity. She merely hints at the inevitable emergence of conflicts between individuals trying to work out what the 'common interest' is; she calls for some kind of mechanism 'to realize unity', in other words, to settle disagreements. Yet, while recognizing the potentially conflictual diversity of 'concrete individuals'' aspirations, Samsonova seems to assume that

conflicts can be resolved and unity preserved. Whether her choice of words and emphasis stem from sheer idealism or the political constraints within which she is attempting to break the mould of the official collectivist dogma, her ideas certainly constitute a progressive, albeit timid, contribution to the debate; a debate which is really concerned with the nature of democracy.

Finally, a couple of contributors tackle the issue of collectivism while analysing American theories on social conformism. I. Kon is particularly interested in the work of the American psychologist Solomon Ash, whose experiments have shown that many individuals find it extremely painful, if not impossible, to resist group pressure. Hence their conformism. With his own society in mind, Kon then advocates a greater degree of freedom for the individual within the collective on the grounds that the individual will be able to fulfil his creative potential, thus making a useful contribution to the collective, only if he enjoys a reasonable degree of autonomy. A disciplinarian collective turns its members into conformists incapable of taking initiatives.<sup>11</sup>

The second article, unlike all the other pieces so far examined, defends collectivism. Its author, A. Petrovskii, who is introduced as a 'well-known psychologist' by Literaturnaya gazeta, reports on the XIX International Congress of Psychologists, which he himself attended in London.<sup>12</sup> Petrovskii gives a brief summary of what he refers to as the 'dominant theory' in American psychology, according

to which one is either a conformist or a non-conformist. Petrovskii deems the theory simplistic. He argues, in particular, that conformists may merely pretend to agree with the rules of society, abiding by them solely in order to secure their career or because they cannot pluck up the courage to oppose them. It is not inconceivable that Petrovskii is here thinking about his own society. Nevertheless, he unequivocally rejects the Western theory which he contrasts with that of collectivism. One can see how the American theory, however inoffensive it may appear to a Western audience, can alarm a conservative Soviet ideologist: conformism inevitably conveys a negative connotation whether because it implies allegiance to capitalism, in a Western context, or passivity, in an East-European one; non-conformism leads to rebellion. On the other hand collectivism means that the individual consciously and actively shares the aims and ideals of the collective, as is the case, Petrovskii insists, in Soviet society.

Petrovskii's somewhat uninspiring piece would probably be of little interest to Soviet readers were it not for the information it provides on one aspect of Western psychology. It is, indeed, unlikely that the paper's intention was to promote such a banal defence of collectivism. In fact, Literaturnaya gazeta clearly favours authors who call for a reappraisal of the role of the individual. Much publicity is given to Samsonova's contribution although her followers were in the minority at the conference, and Sukhomlinskii's second

article - a lengthy one (2,400 words) - occupies a whole page together with a shorter one by the same author, in which ways of improving teaching methods are discussed. Finally, the relatively large number of articles on psychology, which will be examined next, confirms the paper's commitment to the debate.

## 2. Shift of Emphasis: From the Collective to the Individual

Neither Sukhomlinskii nor Samsonova advocates individualism. Their concern is that the collective hampers the harmonious development of the individual, the assumption being that an association of uninhibited individuals would produce a better collective. That Literaturnaya gazeta should invite contributions from psychologists, psychiatrists and anthropologists shows further evidence of the growing demand for the recognition of the needs and potential of individuals.

Most of the articles which will be examined here address the question of whether an 'Institute of Man' (chelovek) should be set up in order to develop and better organize the research work aimed at increasing scientific knowledge of the human mind. We shall see, however, that the question is not merely a technical one.

In an article, published shortly after this debate ended, L. Zemskov - a psychiatrist who does not seem to hold any prestigious position in the academic establishment -

vividly demonstrates how the urgently needed development of psychology entails a drastic questioning of the conception of Man as promoted by the Stalinist vision of society and, to a lesser extent, the revolutionary imagery of the twenties.<sup>13</sup>

Zemskov argues that although it is now possible to treat practically any neurosis by means of medication - an unintentionally revealing statement testifying to the sorry state of Soviet psychology - it would be much better to tackle the roots of the problem and seek to prevent such illnesses. Many neuroses, he continues, are diagnosed amongst 'weak and impressionable people' who happen to have been roughly handled, like, for instance, this elderly professor who became insomniac and suicidal after he was forced to retire. Zemskov rejects the opinion, commonly shared by colleagues, that these 'weak and impressionable people' would have had to pull themselves together during the war and should not expect any special treatment in peacetime. He then recalls one of his lecturers in psychiatry explaining that:

... the social value of an individual is by no means determined by the fact that he has a so-called 'strong type of nervous activity', - i.e. he can be persistent, obstinate and always gets his way. On the contrary, it may be the case that someone who is weak, shy and unsure of himself is more useful to society because it is precisely the kind of person who is prepared to devote himself to people, to give everything he's got. And usually these people do have something to give as they are often talented and intelligent.<sup>14</sup>

The scientific value of this observation as to the connection between psychological make-up, moral qualities and intellectual abilities is, to say the least, dubious. However, it is likely that the author is merely alluding to the fact that important positions are frequently occupied by incompetent careerists, while the talent of socially less ambitious or less confident people goes to waste. Perhaps more importantly, Zemskov questions the Stalinist obsession with moral endurance and physical strength which, for example, permeates propagandist visual art and conformist literature - Chakovskii's hero, Andrei, is, indeed, 'persistent and obstinate' and he does 'get his way'.<sup>15</sup>

The ideological justification for promoting such an image of Man was that psychological problems and mental disorders were caused by oppressive social relations and would therefore automatically disappear under socialism. Judging by the debate in Literaturnaya gazeta, this theory was at last being widely and publicly challenged even by professionals holding high-ranking positions; for instance, A. V. Snezhnevskii, director of the Institute of Psychiatry of the Academy of Medical Sciences, - whose major contribution to psychiatric repression has since been denounced -, argues that it has been a mistake to dismiss biological and hereditary factors.<sup>16</sup>

Zemskov's position, however, is much bolder. Firstly, he explicitly blames the academic establishment of the thirties

for its slavish devotion to the Stalinist dogma. Those responsible for the backwardness of Soviet psychology are:

these bureaucrats of the scientific world who would consider any serious attempt to research into the origins of nervous and mental illnesses as slander on contemporary reality. And then the war broke out.<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, unlike Snezhnevskii, Zemskov clearly states that psychological problems and neuroses frequently stem from conflicts which take place within the work collective, the family or in communal flats. He welcomes the fact that an increasing number of people publicly, albeit timidly, express the opinion that this occurs 'even in the best possible society'. Zemskov's indictment of the Stalinist macho image of the perfect Soviet citizen is two-sided: the 'psychologically weak' must be protected for humanitarian reasons, to alleviate their suffering, and also to achieve a better management of human resources, ensuring that all talents are put to good use.

Although Snezhnevskii is less outspoken than Zemskov when it comes to establishing a connection between social relations and psychological disorders, he is equally eager to stress the alarming extent and urgency of the problem. He argues, for instance, that nowadays people are more likely to suffer from nervous disorders - which must not be confused, however, with mental illnesses - than in the nineteenth century; many young children are psychologically disturbed; people should be taught to cope with conflicts and



contradictions; as psychiatry is still taboo, patients are reluctant to seek professional help and are often entrusted to a psychiatrist's care when they are already beyond help.

What emerges from all the articles is that this part of people's lives has been neglected for so many years that even professionals have only a very hazy idea of the extent of the problem. Data are suspiciously absent. It is through their daily contacts with patients that general practitioners have realized how great the need for psychotherapy is. A short article written by M. Markov on the basis of seven interviews with members of the medical profession shows how concerned many doctors are that because of their lack of training and facilities they are not in a position to give adequate help to their patients in need of psychotherapy. One interviewee claims that although the number of patients suffering from psychological or mental disorders is unknown, it is commonly believed to be considerable. Yet at present special psychotherapy units exist almost exclusively in the sanatoria of the health resorts. Another interviewee suggests that each polyclinic should be able to offer such a service. Markov heartily supports these doctors' appeal for the development of psychotherapy and the setting up of a research centre which would publicize and develop the work which has been achieved by the already existing teams, scattered all over the country.<sup>18</sup>

While no participant in the debate denies the urgent need to develop psychotherapy, opinions differ as to what the

method of treatment should be. One week before the beginning of the debate on whether it is appropriate to set up an 'Institute of Man', Literaturnaya gazeta devoted a whole page to a discussion on psychoanalysis in the science section. The author of the first article, Yu. Krelin, a doctor who, like Zemslov, does not seem to occupy any high-ranking official post, advocates the use of psychoanalysis.<sup>19</sup> The second piece signed by the already quoted director of the Institute of Psychiatry, A. Snezhnevskii, is a firm, albeit civil rebuttal of Krelin's argument.<sup>20</sup>

Krelin argues that it is possible to use the system of treatment worked out by Freud the doctor, while disagreeing with the theories of Freud the philosopher. Many patients could have their suffering greatly relieved if the trauma that has caused the pain could be brought out of the unconscious into the conscious, which is what psychoanalysis is all about. True, Krelin advocates psychoanalysis with a noticeable degree of caution. He is careful not to call for a complete rehabilitation of 'freudism' - he regrets the negative connotation that the word has acquired - and admits that the time has not yet come to promote psychoanalysis as an independent form of treatment. At the same time he unabashedly declares that present Soviet psychotherapy has nothing to do with science, precisely the argument which has been used by official ideologists in order to discredit Freud's ideas. Also, he proposes that immediate action be taken to integrate some elements of psychoanalysis into

general medical practice. All doctors, he believes, even general practitioners, should be familiar with psychoanalysis; all medical students should be introduced to it.

Snezhnevskii's response contains many predictable arguments. Freud ignored the 'bio-social' dimension of Man, reducing all mental disorders to sexual complexes. He wrongly believed that neuroses and psychoses were purely psychological illnesses, unlike Pavlov who clearly demonstrated that they are always partly caused by physiological disorders. Snezhnevskii strongly opposes Krel'in's suggestion that psychoanalysis should become part of general medical practice, arguing that, after all, Freud himself promoted psychoanalysis only as a means of treating neuroses, psychoses and hysteria. By making such a clear-cut distinction between those with neuroses and those without - i. e. between the sick and the healthy - Snezhnevskii reveals that he does not see the theory of the unconscious as providing any valuable clue to the workings of the human mind. Finally, he dismisses psychoanalysis as a thing of the past. It did have some followers in Russia before and after the Revolution, but those who tried to apply this method of treatment, including himself in the late twenties, found it ineffective.

During the years 1967-71 Literaturnaya gazeta published only these two articles on psychoanalysis. No round tables or Discussion Club debates - which usually last several weeks -

are to be found on the subject. Snezhnevskii's response to Krelin shows that the academic establishment is reluctant to reopen a file which for years has been considered closed for good. The publication of Krelin's article is all to the credit of Literaturnaya gazeta. The editorial board is obviously aware of treading a dangerous path as it tamely reminds readers in a short introduction to the two articles that psychoanalysis is a non-scientifically based psychotherapeutic method introduced by Freud and that the interest it initially aroused has considerably dwindled both in the Soviet Union and in the West. It looks as if the price to pay for publishing Krelin's courageous piece was to pay lip service to the official dogma and give some room to one of its supporters.

The decision taken by Literaturnaya gazeta to publish Krelin's article is in itself indicative of a persistent, or perhaps renewed, interest in the theories of Freud. So is Snezhnevskii's suggestion that there may be a case for the publication of a critical analysis of Freud's theories, although he refutes the accusation made by Krelin that Freud's works have not been published in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Snezhnevskii's articles shed some light on the degree of resistance which researchers in psychology are likely to encounter. His criticism of psychoanalysis is mainly defensive and fails to suggest any alternative. In his first contribution, he is keen to stress the great number of people in need of psychotherapy, yet his approach is often

strikingly unscientific. For instance, he attributes psychological disturbances in children to the fact that too much emphasis in their education has been placed on technology and science, at the expense of literature and the arts, which, he argues, nurture a sense of beauty and morality in people. The young generation should be given a good moral education which would make them confident in the future and less prone to disappointment. One understands why Krelin should accuse Soviet psychotherapy of having nothing to do with science.

It seems that the debate on whether it is necessary to set up an 'Institute of Man' is a reflection of these conflicts between conservative academics, who, though not necessarily averse to the development of human sciences, are anxious to keep it within the already approved ideological framework, and researchers calling for a more radical questioning of the old theories. The debate is about finding a new academic structure which would give official recognition to the Cinderella subjects of Soviet academia, like psychology, as well as accommodate new developments in well established disciplines, such as philosophy, pedagogy and anthropology.

The debate which lasted approximately half a year was triggered off by a round table, an account of which, jointly written by Evg. Bogat and Yu. Timofeev, appeared in the autumn of 1967.<sup>21</sup> The discussion begins with a certain amount of woolly philosophizing on the nature of Man, yet finishes

on a more concrete note. The creation is proposed of an interdisciplinary research institute which would promote the study of Man and of the human mind, defining its own objectives and its own methodology. Academics and readers in general are invited to partake in the debate.

Only a third, approximately, of all participants in the debate support the idea of an interdisciplinary institute. However, many of those who oppose the idea agree that some kind of structure is needed in order to centralize, publicize and coordinate the research carried out in the various human sciences all over the country. B. G. Anan'ev, the head of a laboratory of psychology and anthropology at Leningrad University, forcefully defends this position. Rather than invest in a new research centre, he argues, it would be more judicious to 'strengthen the material and technical base' of already existing institutions. A small team of researchers would be sufficient to work out what the main issues are as well as gather information from the various research units. Only such a collaboration between different disciplines, including not only the human sciences but also physics, chemistry and mathematics, can help to solve social problems in the work place, education, social services etc...<sup>22</sup>

Those in favour of an 'Institute of Man' seem to be particularly concerned with the development of psychology. It is the case, for instance, of V. Myasishchev, doctor in medical sciences and corresponding member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.<sup>23</sup> Myasishchev draws lessons from

history. He reminds readers of the famous Russian scientist V. M. Bekhterev who before the Revolution, set up an institute of psychoneurology and after the Revolution, with the approval of the young Soviet government - Myasishchev is anxious to point out - an institute specializing in the study of the human mind.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the latter had to merge with the physiology institute of the Academy of Sciences in 1952, which had catastrophic repercussions on the development of psychology: only two tiny departments of psychology now exist in the whole country. An 'Institute of Man' would involve several disciplines, in particular medicine, history and social sciences, but the core of its programme would be in psychology and pedagogy.

The debate can be somewhat confusing at times. Not all contributors share the same academic concerns or the same institutional interests. However, most of them agree on two major points. Firstly, it is essential to develop all human sciences in order to achieve a better social management of society. Secondly, - and this seems to be the crux of the debate - it is time to break away from the old thesis according to which Man is fundamentally a social being and therefore can only be the subject matter of the social sciences.

The overwhelming majority of contributors fiercely challenge the limitations of the official dogma and call for a collaboration between all the sciences concerned with the numerous aspects of the human condition. Myasishchev points

out that the XXVIII International Congress of Psychology, which took place in Moscow in 1966, came to the conclusion that the study of Man is a matter for not only the social, but also the natural sciences, and that the aim of psychology should be to help understand the personality of an individual. A whole page is devoted to a debate between law professors discussing the part that psychology should play in criminology and the extent to which the personality of the offender is relevant in explaining and judging criminal behaviour, as social circumstances cannot account for everything.<sup>25</sup>

All these academics are anxious to depart from the determinist theories which have stemmed from the idea that the 'essence of Man is social'. Many authors insist that the individuality of each human being must be recognized. A philosophy professor, A. Zvorykin, actually establishes a link between the social determinism favoured by the official ideology and the failure to fully comprehend human nature. He argues that

[by] placing the emphasis on the social origin of the personality, we often ignore some of its important properties, such as individuality, uniqueness, originality.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike Zvorykin, N. Chavcharadze, whose article is published on the same page, does not promote a pluridisciplinary approach to the study of Man. Yet he seems equally wary of determinist oversimplifications and the failure to recognize that Man is both object and subject. He



calls for the development of Marxist philosophical anthropology, which by means of the dialectical method makes the synthesis between the objective and the subjective.<sup>27</sup>

Although this debate does not deal directly with the theory of collectivism, it raises very similar issues to those tackled by Sukhomlinskii and Samsonova. The call for the development of psychology and psychotherapy echoes Sukhomlinskii's concern about the neglect and bullying of the individual which are enshrined in the collectivist ethos. The more general discussion on the need to promote human sciences indicates a willingness to move away from determinist theories incapable of accounting for the complexity of human behaviour and social relations.

Both debates emphasize the need to rehabilitate the role of the individual within the collective. Firstly, it is wrong to believe that the interests of the collective should come before those of the individual. Secondly, the needs and aspirations of individuals must be catered for not only to ensure their well-being, but also because the personal development of each individual constitutes an asset for society. Collectivism is inadequate because it advocates the subordination of the individual to the group, thus hampering the development of both the individual and the group.

### 3. Conclusion

In many respects the human interest stories examined in the previous chapter made more interesting reading. They

raised a much wider range of issues and generated criticisms, often far more biting than those contained in these theoretical debates. Some comments had obvious political implications. Recall, for instance, Borin's observations on the democratic process, Il'ina's concern with the lack of civic responsibility amongst her compatriots and, above all, the long debate on invalids, which explicitly established a link between the neglect of the individual and the bureaucratic system of management. As has already been pointed out, the debates were never overtly political, yet politics was never far away.

As no political scientists or economists participate in this academic debate, none of the above mentioned issues are explored in purely political terms. Nevertheless, the call for a redefinition of the role of the individual in society is at the heart of the concerns expressed in the first series of articles. As a matter of fact, by questioning the theory of collectivism, these specialists in pedagogy, psychology, philosophy and anthropology challenge an essential part of the official ideology which legitimizes the political system.

Firstly, it is acknowledged that Soviet society has not done away with inherently oppressive social relationships. These oppressive relationships are seen as the outcome of so-called collectivist practices which force individuals into submission and encourage bullying. Collectivism has failed on two accounts: it has produced a society which is both

uncaring - it neglects its weaker members -, and wasteful - it hinders the harmonious development of the individual.

Secondly, it is essential that the importance of the human factor should be recognized not only in order to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of social phenomena (see the case for the development of sociology), but also because good management depends as much on collective action as on individual talents. Individuals must be free to develop their abilities to the full, so they can give all that they have to society. Clearly, the 'new thinking' promoted by Gorbachev in the mid-eighties, with its emphasis on individual initiatives and the competitive spirit, did not spring up from nowhere.

The conclusions reached in this debate may seem both obvious and simplistic to a Western observer. No one, for instance, discusses the oppression of the individual in relation to social classes or political groups. Ironically, the arguments put forward often belong to the liberal discourse. Many crucial issues are not given any attention at all: what effects will the freeing of the individual have on the collective? Where should the line be drawn between individual initiative and individualistic behaviour? The one-sided nature of the debate and its lack of sophistication are partly a reflection of the political restrictions of the time, partly a reaction against the ubiquity of the old collectivist dogma. The priority was to rehabilitate the notion of the individual.

Yet, in spite of its limitations, the debate which Literaturnaya gazeta publicized and encouraged suggests that an important shift in thinking was occurring during the uninspiring Brezhnev years; a shift away from communist principles towards more liberal Western values.<sup>28</sup>

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6. Yu. Azarov, 'Shkol'noe samoupravlenie - opyt i problemy', LG, 1969, No.34, pp.10-11.
7. A. Levshin, 'Otpoved' vmesto spora', LG, 1967, No.25, p.11.
8. See, for example, the discussion between N. Atarov and L. Levshin, 'Bezdetnaya pedagogika i strana detstva', LG, 1968, No.2, p.11; and Genrikh Volkov, 'Kogda znanie stanovitsya siloi'', LG, 1971, No.17, p.11. The debate on the education system (approximately 110,000 words) covers other important issues, in particular, the pernicious practice of inflating marks in order 'to fulfil the plan', the need to stream pupils, time-consuming red-tape, the unequal performance of schools and the inadequacy of entrance exams.
9. See LG, 1967, No.41, p.10.
10. Ibid.
11. I. Kon, 'Svoboda lichnosti i konformizm', LG, 1967, No.17, p.11.
12. A. Petrovskii, '"Ya" i "My"', LG, 1970, No.23, p.12.
13. L. Zemskov, 'Neuzheli nel'zya inache... - Zametki vracha - psikhiatra', LG, 1968, No.7, p.12.
14. Ibid.
15. See appendix 6.
16. A. V. Snezhnevskii, 'Zalog dushevnogo zdorovya', LG, 1967, No.4, p.12; see also 'Karatel'naya psikhiatriya - Vospominaniya ochevidtstva', Moskovskie novosti, 12 August 1990, No.32, p.14: the author, Vl. Lupandin, gives details of A. V. Snezhnevskii's leading role in providing the regime with a 'medical' way of silencing dissidents.
17. Zemskov, loc. cit.
18. M. Markov, 'Sem' interv'yu o psikhoterapii', LG, 1967, No.36, p.11.
19. Yu. Krelin, '"Zagovory" ili nauka?', LG, 1967, No.36, p.11.
20. A. V. Snezhnevskii, 'Proidennyi etap', LG, 1967, No.36, p.11.
21. See LG, 1967, No.37, p.11.
22. B. G. Anan'ev, 'Nuzhna edinaya strategiya nauchnogo poznaniya cheloveka', LG, 1967, No.47, p.13.
23. V. Myasishchev, 'Delo, kotoromu sluzhil Bekhterev', LG, 1968, No.4, p.11.
24. Vl. M. Bekhterev died suddenly in mysterious circumstances. It is rumoured that he was poisoned on the orders of Stalin, whose state of mind he had diagnosed as paranoid. Vyshinskii delivered a funeral oration in his

praise; see A. Vaksberg, Vychinskii - Le procureur de Staline, Paris: Albin Michel, 1991, pp.46-7.

25. See LG, 1967, No.48, p.12: these articles will be examined in more detail in chapter IX, section 1.

26. A. Zvorykin, 'Nepovtorimyi mir lichnosti... kak ego poznat'', LG, 1967, No.46, p.10.

27. N. Chavcharadze, '"Ya i transistor..." ili "ya i dolg..."', LG, 1967, No.46, p.10.

28. G. Hosking suggests that the influence of Dostoevsky and the Vekhi thinkers was making itself increasingly felt among the Soviet intelligentsia in the sixties. No hard evidence of such influence can be detected in the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta. Yet the debates on collectivism reveal an acute awareness of the dehumanization of Soviet society reminiscent, for instance, of Nikolai Berdyaev's judgement on Soviet Russia: 'Man is a means for this new organisation of society and not the new organisation of society for man'; see N. Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1937, p.225, and G. Hosking, Beyond Socialist realism - Soviet Fiction since Ivan Denisovich, London: Granada Publishing, 1980, p.32: the influence of Dostoevsky and the Vekhi thinkers was the subject of a heated debate at a seminar organized by the Writers' Union in April 1969, which was indicative of the authorities' concern over these writers' popularity.

## V. SEARCHING FOR NEW FORMS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Over the years 67-71 Literaturnaya gazeta published a series of articles which indicate that the world of academia was not alone in seeking new forms of relationships between individuals. The articles examined in this chapter have been written mostly by journalists, writers and members of the public, very occasionally by sociologists (approximately 60,000 words in all). Whether they are concerned with finding new ways of organizing 'free time' (some wonder if free time should be organized at all) or with the emergence of informal gatherings, most authors express their misgivings about the collectivist approach to social life. On the whole their articles make much more exciting reading than the rather gloomy accounts examined in the first chapter (see 'Perceptions of the collective') as they do not confine themselves to recording the disastrous results of authoritarian collectivist practices. Alternatives are indeed suggested and discussed. Some articles even favourably consider new developments in Soviet society which show evidence of a spontaneous and active resistance to the type of stilted social relations dictated by the requirements of official organizations.

## 1. Popular Disaffection from Officially Organized Activities

The debate on the organization of leisure activities was triggered off by the journalist L. Zhukhovitskii whose article 'Boredom and Free Time' appeared in the very first issue of the new Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>1</sup> The discussion was spread over a six-month period (approximately 9,000 words in all) and a review of Grushin's book, Free Time - Present Problems, was published in January 1968.<sup>2</sup> Although contributors often seem to have the young in mind, the issue is generally thought to concern all Soviet citizens who now have more 'free time' on their hands as a result of the recently introduced five-day working week.

What is to be done, Zhukhovitskii asks, with this young lad who, like many others, ended up at the police station because he had drunk and started a fight out of sheer boredom? Zhukhovitskii disagrees with the still commonly held view that the only way to keep young people out of mischief is to set up more clubs and sports facilities. This, he argues, will not help to solve what is fundamentally a 'problem of personality'. Society should be able to ensure the 'harmonious development of the individual', so that everyone can enjoy a 'rich spiritual life' and fully realize their talents. That clubs or sports and leisure facilities should play a role in the process is not to be ruled out, as long as the purpose of organizing activities is not to contain individuals, but rather to help their development.



Zhukhovitskii's second main argument is that individuals can fully and 'harmoniously' develop only if they achieve a high level of communication with one another. People do not talk to each other, he complains. They even marry while they hardly know their future partners. He wishes that there were more clubs where young people could debate between themselves and learn to 'respect the opinions of others'. Zhukhovitskii does not specify whether these discussions should be supervised or not, yet he obviously fails to mention the need for organizers very intentionally.

The lack of communication between individuals is a recurrent theme in Literaturnaya gazeta. It comes up, in particular, in the debate on materialism which will be later examined in this study. It is not unusual to come across the argument that Soviet people have unfortunately become more interested in accumulating consumer goods than in communicating with one another. This is not, however, the part of Zhukhovitskii's article which, in this debate, caught the attention of readers. Two opposite camps have emerged: on the one hand those who agree with Zhukhovitskii that only individuals with poorly developed personalities find themselves at a loose end during their free time; on the other, those who criticize Zhukhovitskii for underestimating the need for more leisure amenities. A reader, A. Kalashnikova, surmises that only someone who 'has never been beyond the bounds of the Sadovoe kol'tso in Moscow' can be ignorant of the acute shortage of leisure facilities

throughout the country. A large section of the Soviet population lives in provincial towns and villages which do not have a single theatre or cinema, where the library closes at 7.00 p.m. and where the only cafe is likely to have been taken over by drunkards carrying bottles of vodka in their pockets.<sup>3</sup> The same argument is put forward in a later issue by another reader, V. Tairov from Baku.<sup>4</sup> Commenting upon an article by V. Orlov, a keen supporter of Zhukhovitskii in the discussion who pointed out that many young Muscovites spend their time drinking and never set foot in a theatre, Tairov sarcastically concedes that, indeed, it might be a 'question of personality' in Moscow; but the point is, however, that in the villages even theatre lovers never set foot in a theatre for reasons outside their control.

On reflection the two camps are, to some extent, at cross-purposes. Zhukhovitskii and Orlov do not argue against the need to increase the availability of leisure facilities, nor do the two above-mentioned readers deny that there is also a problem of attitude. As Tairov himself concludes, both issues are closely connected.

The real controversy lies in another line of argument which, in some articles, misleadingly gets mixed up with the debate on 'personality' versus 'facilities'. The major issue which genuinely divides the contributors to the debate is the question of whether clubs, where activities are 'collectively' organized from above, should continue to exist. Zhukhovitskii does not make a clear distinction

between sports and cultural activities on the one hand and clubs on the other. However, the reactions provoked by his article indicate that the distinction is, indeed, a crucial one. Kalashnikova deplores the lack of cultural entertainment and cafes, but does not even mention clubs.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile Tairov complains that the club, which very often is the only leisure facility in the village, completely fails to meet the needs of the public. Villagers, he argues, have had enough of these tedious talks on 'friendship and comradeship' which are regularly and perfunctorily delivered solely in order to enable the authorities to claim that something has been done. Club organizers are badly trained and only succeed in alienating their young audiences who in the end prefer to hang around in the streets.<sup>6</sup>

None of the contributors denies that clubs have been shunned by young people, yet positions differ as to the best ways of addressing the problem. The journalist A. Protopopova firmly believes in organizing group activities and sees Zhukhovitskii's article as an insult to the thousands of well-meaning club organizers all over the country who have worked hard to entertain and educate children and teenagers. At the same time she recognizes that organizers ought to be better trained and made aware of young people's expectations.<sup>7</sup> This proposition, however, is vehemently rejected by V. Orlov who detects in it a desire to mould children into uniform citizens. Orlov reiterates Zhukhovitskii's argument that society need not set up more

clubs, but rather educate Man, ensure the 'spiritual growth' of each of its members, in particular, by nurturing what makes each individual unique.<sup>8</sup> In an article published on the same page, the writer B. Anashenkov expresses his indignation at the heavy drinking, violence and general coarseness which he witnessed at a game of hockey, thus implicitly supporting Orlov's belief that group activities, sports and entertainment cannot make up for an insufficiently developed personality.<sup>9</sup>

The last substantial contribution to the debate is a very orthodox article by the writer, M. Zlatogorov. Zlatogorov fiercely criticizes Orlov for advocating what he sees as an individualistic approach to the process of personal development. His criticisms are also levelled, albeit indirectly, at Protopopova inasmuch as he does not blame supposedly incompetent leaders for the popular disaffection of collectively organized activities, but the young themselves - at least those who show no interest in continuing the political 'struggle and serving the people'. Zlatogorov unimaginatively argues that the citizens of a socialist society can 'spiritually' develop only if they fulfill their social duty, and this entails the submission of the personal to the social. Finally, he urges his compatriots to spend their newly acquired free time working for the progress of science and technology as well as for the ideological struggle. It is regrettable that Zlatogorov's mirthless article should close the debate (Tairov's short

letter was published a couple of months later), yet its angry tone can be interpreted as a reflection of the extent of popular alienation from the officially promoted patterns of social behaviour.<sup>10</sup>

The issue of leisure activities presents observers with the opportunity to reexamine the relationship existing between the individual and the collective as defined by the official ideology. While it is possible to overrate the achievements of a work collective for the simple reason that no one can completely evade it, it is more difficult to ignore the mass disaffection with leisure activities or to control the way people spend their free time. Regardless of their positions as to the worth of officially promoted group activities, all contributors agree that they do not enjoy a great deal of popularity. Zlatogorov unwittingly provides us with the reasons why people stay away from official organizations: they have grown tired of propaganda and can no longer stand being told what to do.

By publishing only one article by a hard-core ideologist, Literaturnaya gazeta shows its willingness to support the thesis that the individual should be encouraged to pursue his or her own interests, thus implicitly denouncing the ubiquity of the propaganda machine. However, the argument presented by Zhukhovitskii and Orlov is greatly weakened by their reluctance to tackle the issue of ideology openly - unlike their opponent, Zlatogorov. Although their emphasis on the need to preserve the uniqueness of each

individual presupposes a mistrust of state ideology, they fail, for instance, to question the quality of cultural entertainments. After all, boredom can result as much from an inability to develop interests as from the ideological uniformity of the cultural entertainments available.

While state ideology is never openly challenged, criticisms of the didactic nature of the mass media can be found. For instance, the sociologist A. Petrov deplores the fact that his compatriots devote less time to reading as a result of the development of the mass media, in particular, television. Yet he believes that reading has never before been so important in the development of an individual, because he sees it as the most direct way of perceiving reality. This extract from his article reveals his great mistrust of the state-controlled media:

Communication with the screen is deprived of this measure of individuality which is characteristic of the communication with a book... In fact the increasingly social nature of our life calls for the development of what is unique in everyone's personality... By taking upon themselves some of the 'supra-individual' functions of the book, the modern mass media have reduced the role of reading, yet, at the same time, it has strengthened its influence as the most personal of all the existing means of perceiving world culture.<sup>11</sup>

Yu. Levada points out that, according to Grushin's findings, some layers of the population already use the mass media with circumspection. Muscovites, he reports, watch less television than people in other large cities, which shows

that they are becoming increasingly demanding as to the quality of the programmes. On the other hand more and more people read newspapers and journals.<sup>12</sup> Just looking at Soviet newspaper stands and bookshops, a Western observer may wonder why reading should be seen as an occupation less dominated by state ideology. Petrov's enthusiasm for reading makes more sense if we bear in mind that Soviet citizens have, in fact, several ways of finding interesting reading matter. They can subscribe to the most sought after Soviet publications, which are never to be seen in shops, purchase foreign or rare Soviet books on the black market or get hold of illegal literature.

Levada's very positive review of Grushin's book - apparently the very first published study of leisure time in the Soviet Union - is certainly the least conventional contribution to the debate. To begin with, Grushin destroys the myth that Soviet people do not know what to do with their 'free time'. The working week might have become shorter, yet a great deal of time is wasted on transport, housework and shopping. This, combined with the fact that people study in order to improve their qualifications, means that, in fact, they need more 'free time', especially women, who, as a rule, spend more hours on domestic chores and shopping than men.

Furthermore, Levada and Grushin address the question of whether there is a need for uniform 'collectively' organized activities in a very radical manner. They favour variety and spontaneity. Grushin's research has revealed that, whether

ideologists like it or not, different groups of people actually spend their free time differently and these groups fully coincide with neither socio-economic classes nor socio-professional categories. Both sociologists wholeheartedly welcome these developments as shown in this extract:

It is not so much a question of high or low levels of culture, rather of various types of culture. (A more specialized term to designate such phenomena is 'subculture': we speak of youth, urban, rural etc... subcultures within the framework of the same society and same culture.) It is wrong to see this diversity as a 'retreat' from some abstract ideal of a general cultural levelling ('uravnitel'nosti'). It would be even more absurd to demand that this diversity should be eliminated.<sup>13</sup>

In 1968 this was a remarkably unconventional line of argument to be publicized in an organ of the non-specialist press. Not only does Grushin brush aside the cumbersome tripartite vision of society traditionally promoted by official ideologists, he also openly welcomes the emergence of spontaneous social trends that, in the end, constitute a threat to the authoritarian centralism of the Soviet system.

Although the general public was still unfamiliar with the sociological concept of subculture, references to 'informal' behaviour and groupings frequently crop up in the dozen or so articles that focus on youth (approximately 25,000 words). Yet these phenomena are never discussed in positive terms.

A number of contributions, including many readers' letters both published and unpublished, vehemently denounce



the non-conformity of the increasingly restless Soviet youth. Young people are criticized with equal vigour for having the audacity to kiss in underground stations 'as people do in Paris', beating up defenceless senior citizens or enjoying the depraved Western sounds of jazz and rock music. No attempt is made to distinguish between delinquent behaviour and positive manifestations of a nascent youth culture. It is usually suggested that punitive measures be introduced to abate the allegedly high incidence of hooliganism, - a conveniently vague and dangerously emotional term that, in the mind of these authors, encompasses a wide range of new attitudes that are developing amongst the young outside the framework of official organizations and beyond their control.<sup>14</sup>

Such narrow-mindedness that stems from a glorified and self-righteous perception of the older generations' achievements, can be witnessed in any society. These pieces would be of little interest if Literaturnaya gazeta did not also expose their authors' priggishness and inability to face some of the evils affecting Soviet society, in particular the ubiquitous hypocrisy that feeds both the much debated cynicism of the young and the puritanical conservatism of some of their elders.

The writers who come to the rescue of Soviet youth turn the criticism back against the older generation, i.e. their own. The author G. Medynskii doubts whether it is fair to blame the young for their lack of enthusiasm, unambiguously

hinting at past and present hardships. 'Is it really the case', Medynskii rhetorically asks, 'that our life has been so perfect and that there was and is nothing in it that at times can undermine the spirit of dream and romanticism in which we ourselves grew up?'<sup>15</sup> The playwright V. Rozov takes Medynskii's point one step further, aggressively arguing that the older generation's resentment towards their rebellious or distant children reflects their dissatisfaction with their own lives.<sup>16</sup> To those who attack the young for their lack of commitment at work, the jurist G. Min'kovskii retorts that they would be best advised to level their criticisms at the education system, which is geared towards higher education, thus leaving thousands of youngsters without adequate training for industry, - an issue that will be more scholarly discussed a few months later by the social scientist Perevedentsev.<sup>17</sup> All three authors agree that the 'alienation' of the young - the word is actually used by Rozov ('otchuzhdennost') - has been brought about by their elders' double standards, corruption and meaningless consumerism.<sup>18</sup>

However sympathetic towards the younger generation these authors may be, they nevertheless fail to acknowledge the positive function of a youth culture developing independently of any previously set pattern. Medynskii reaffirms his faith in Soviet youth's willingness and ability to carry on the good fight. Less optimistic, Rozov confesses to being confounded by the young's apparent lack of interest in

conducting an ideological dialogue with their elders, whom they prefer to ignore.

The existence of informal youth groups (neformal'nye gruppy) is openly discussed in an article by a high-ranking academic from Leningrad, the sociologist A. Kharchev. His argument unwittingly highlights the ambiguous position of liberal-minded authors who understand why the young should be critical of their society, yet cannot accept their increasing reluctance to endorse their elders' thwarted dreams. Kharchev, too, blames teachers and parents' double standards, the discrepancy between their private thoughts and their public statements, as well as society's general tendency to oppose natural changes in behaviour, tastes and aspirations, thus only succeeding in producing mysterious and uncontrollable clandestine groups:

Sociology and social psychology still know very little about the structure of these groups and about the way they influence their members. However the mere fact that these groups often figure in police records does not give cause for optimism. It is precisely in these youth groups that a youth subculture takes shape, - a subculture which at times contributes to the formation of a psychology alien to us and against which, therefore, one must seriously fight.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear from this extract that Kharchev perceives the burgeoning informal youth culture as a threat to socialist ideology as he understands it. Quite logically, he proposes a course of action, which will be suggested again nearly two decades later as informal groups were beginning to

mushroom under Gorbachev, i.e. to acknowledge the existence of these groups in order to be able to contain their influence and set up officially vetted clubs that recreate the 'psychology of informal groups' while remaining within acceptable ideological boundaries.<sup>20</sup>

A few more articles in 1971 referred to long-haired youngsters clad in denim playing Western pop music or following exotic religions. Some observers advocate repressive measures ('The Army will teach them').<sup>21</sup> Others show a willingness to work towards some kind of rapprochement like, for example, the jurist A. Yakovlev who thinks that educators should be trained in such a way that they will not antagonize youngsters and will succeed in being accepted by them as 'informal leaders' ('neformal'nye lidery'). Once at the heart of informal youth culture, educators will be able to 'propagandize socialist ethics, morality and law'. A good Stalinist trick to contain youth culture: socialist in its content, informal in its form!<sup>22</sup>

This short debate on youth brings Levada and Grushin's radicalism to the fore. By supporting the spontaneous emergence of various subcultures, they challenge timorous liberals as well as official ideologists who have always advocated policies aimed at controlling Soviet citizens whether at work or during their 'free time'. Their approach also greatly differs from that of Zhukhovitskii and Orlov inasmuch as they do not set out to educate Soviet people. They do not worry about the 'harmonious development of their

personalities', nor do they speak of the 'need to educate Man'. One cannot help thinking that Orlov's and Zhukhovitskii's idea of well spent leisure time is to sit in a theatre or read the Russian classics. Unlike them, Levada and Grushin do not patronize their compatriots' tastes. They welcome the diversity of their choices and are gratified to see that they are capable of escaping official tutelage in this area of life.

## 2. The Emergence of Informal Gatherings

The sociologist A. Kharchev openly discusses the existence of 'informal youth groups', yet candidly recognizes his profession's ignorance on the subject. In his review of Grushin's book Levada explicitly comments upon the fact that Soviet people have devised ways of spending their 'free time' independently of any official organization or supervision. However, it is not specified what exactly these leisure activities are. Some very valuable information, in this respect, can be found in a couple of articles which very openly and favourably discuss the existence of what has now become known as 'informal gatherings'.

It has already been mentioned that a frequent topic of discussion in Literaturnaya gazeta is the lack of communication between people. Official clubs do not encourage genuine exchanges of views and, as Evg. Bogat sadly points out, people do not visit each other anymore. Bogat quotes the French writer Georges Perec who in his famous novel, Les

Choses, describes how capitalism has reduced the French to the state of mere consumers, incapable of having any meaningful relationships with one another. He then remarks that similar 'negative tendencies' can be observed in the Soviet Union in spite of the socialist nature of its system, and finally urges his compatriots to re-learn the art of conversation.<sup>23</sup>

Bogat's article is rather shallow inasmuch as he does not even make an attempt at analysing the reasons for this sorry state of affairs. This is an indication of the limits of openness at the time: one just did not speak of the fear and suspicion aroused by a climate of political repression, nor was it deemed wise to dwell upon the shortage of consumer goods and the obsessive behaviour it can provoke. Nevertheless, Bogat was pointing to a real problem to which Soviet citizens were already trying to find some concrete solutions, judging by the two articles which will be examined here.

The issue had already been given some attention approximately a year earlier in a very unusual article by I. Prus whose approach was infinitely more challenging than that of Bogat.<sup>24</sup> Rather than dwelling upon the unsociability of her compatriots, Prus focuses on the reawakening of the Soviet population and its efforts to re-establish new channels of communication.

Firstly, in this article revealingly entitled 'Thirst for Social Intercourse', Prus explains why clubs have

declined in popularity since the twenties, a period which Gorbachevites liked to refer to as well. Nowadays, she argues, clubs only generate boredom because they are aimed at that mythical figure 'the average citizen' - an argument often used by journalists and propagandists worried by the disaffection of their readership.<sup>25</sup> People have different interests, she continues, and want to discuss what they are concerned about rather than what the club organizer sees fit to put on the agenda. This is why - and here is the most interesting part of the article - alternative clubs have sprung up. These usually have a small membership of fifteen to twenty, who tend to be members of the scientific and technical intelligentsia, eager to discuss political events and economic issues together. This is how she describes these clubs:

The club does not try to attract a mass audience. It is difficult to talk and debate in the presence of a large crowd. And debating is precisely what the club is about. It invites interesting people, specialists. And a long discussion begins. It is not an evening of questions and answers. It is a discussion between people who have come prepared, who have their own views and know how to defend them. I want to emphasize this point: on the whole they all are equally prepared. They are not students and teachers, just thinking people.<sup>26</sup>

Prus does not specify the status of these clubs. The mere fact that she discusses their existence in Literaturnaya gazeta indicates that, obviously, they are not illegal. In fact she mentions briefly that they often are attached to the

district committee of the komsomol (Young Communist League). On the other hand she insists that the members organize themselves and do not need any plan or instructions from above.

Finally, Prus confidently argues that this phenomenon will keep developing until it becomes a normal part of Soviet people's social life. Reading her article more than twenty years after its publication, at a time when informal organizations have mushroomed under Gorbachev, one can only be impressed by the perspicacity of her judgements:

With time these voluntary societies will probably become an integral part of our lives... Perhaps they will be societies with their own elected 'governments', and local sections; with their own funds made of membership fees; with their own statutes. But that already belongs to the realm of fantasy.<sup>27</sup>

Another article on the same theme appeared approximately a year later in the summer of 1968. The piece is actually an unusually long letter (1,800 words) from a reader, V. Rapoport, an engineer at a tractor factory in Pavlodar.<sup>28</sup>

Many of Rapoport's arguments are similar to those put forward by Prus. The general tone of the piece, however, is angrier, and perhaps more importantly, Rapoport does not present the emergence of 'informal gatherings' as a phenomenon characteristic of the scientific and technical intelligentsia only. Many young workers, he argues, have to do very simple manual jobs, yet they often are more educated and demanding than the older generation, and therefore cannot



be satisfied with the activities organized by the factory clubs. As Prus previously did, Rapoport deems the activities devised by official clubs - lectures, readings etc... - totally inadequate because they are based on the assumption that people do not mind taking on a passive role as mere listeners. This approach, he surmises, was justifiable at a time when workers were poorly educated and needed to be taught, but one-way communication from top to bottom is no longer acceptable. Here is his appreciation of his compatriots' mood:

More and more people wish they could not only take, but also give in the 'cultural exchange'. At the least - this means an active, deeply critical use of cultural values, a craving to test them out with 'one's equals' ('sebe podobnye'), which necessitates an exchange of views. At the most - it means an aspiration to self-expression in politics, culture, science, technology through one's own creative work.<sup>29</sup>

Sickened by the patronizing attitude of official club organizers, Soviet people have begun to meet on their own terms in the privacy of their homes. Rapoport openly discusses the emergence of these completely unsupervised gatherings. He very specifically refers to what he calls a 'family club' that actually exists in his town. A group of ten to fifteen friends, he reports, meet every Wednesday in one of the members' flat. A whole series of topical issues are discussed ranging from poetry to sociology, from genetics to economic reforms. Unlike Prus, Rapoport is filled with

scorn for the socio-political clubs attached to the district committee of the komsomol. It might be the case that the degree of formal supervision of these clubs varies from one authority to the other. In Pavlodar, judging by Rapoport's account, the approach has remained the conventional one. Speakers are invited to give lectures on the understanding that the audience is there only to listen. Here is Rapoport's harsh comment:

This is not a club. It has to be clearly realized that only an organization where horizontal communication prevails, deserves to be called a 'club'; an organization where everyone has the opportunity to express their opinion and show their talents so that there can be an intensive discussion, a contest where not only the external, but also the internal qualities of everyone can become visible. Only then is it possible to find 'one's equals' ('sebe podobnye').<sup>30</sup>

Rapoport highly values the function of these informal clubs inasmuch as they very positively influence the social life of the whole community in spite of their small membership. Ideas which have taken shape in the course of debates organized by the club are taken up and further discussed within the social circle of each member, with the result that they eventually spread all over town. Rapoport also suggests that this craving for a genuine exchange of views on socio-economic, political and cultural issues can be observed among various social and age groups all over the country. His perception of Soviet society strongly contrasts with, for example, Il'ina's portrayal of a hopelessly

lethargic community. This extract from Rapoport's article clearly shows his faith in his compatriots' ability to take initiatives:

Serious social problems usually do not wait until clever people declare they exist and suggest ways of solving them in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta. Practically as soon as a problem arises, a spontaneous search for its solution begins. The problem of social intercourse outside work is no exception. These last few years all kinds of youth cafe-clubs, literary clubs and associations, people's theatres etc... have emerged (and collapsed) with a growing intensity.<sup>31</sup>

Rapoport's lengthy letter is followed by a brief comment from the paper's editorial board. It is pointed out that Literaturnaya gazeta does not often receive such letters and that the crucial issue tackled by this reader ought to be seriously discussed even though it cannot be resolved overnight with a few concrete measures. It seems that the board felt the need to emphasize the importance of Rapoport's contribution as well as hint at its dangerously controversial nature. Unfortunately, Literaturnaya gazeta obviously decided to opt for caution as later on it practically dropped this thorny issue which begs so many questions about the lack of democratic debate. No systematic discussion or round tables were organized on the subject. If Rapoport's and Prus's articles generated any feedback, readers were not informed of it. Rapoport's letter was published nearly a year after Prus's article and is the last major contribution to the debate. Only a couple of references to it are to be found in

1971. The sociologist M. Timashevskaya reports that a survey carried out at the famous Siberian think-tank, Akademgorodok, has revealed that educated people mostly socialize with friends or colleagues with whom they share common interests. We are, therefore, to understand that they shun 'collectively' organized meetings at work or where they live.<sup>32</sup> Six months later, a certain E. Dolov cagily questions the value of the 'collectivist' approach to socializing in a short article (600 words) from which this extract has been taken:

Do not get me wrong. I do not want to belittle the significance of the well-known forms of social intercourse which have traditionally developed in our society, such as work collectives, social evenings in clubs, mass outdoor parties in parks. All this is right, necessary and sensible. But it seems that we also need other forms of social intercourse, more intimate ones (kamernye) if you want.<sup>33</sup>

Dolov's subdued treatment of the issue compares rather badly with Prus's and Rapoport's radical approach. It is nevertheless to the paper's credit that it should have published and supported two outspoken contributions which quite openly describe and welcome the reawakening of Soviet civil society outside the framework offered by the authorities.

Although very informative, Prus's and Rapoport's articles obviously leave many questions unanswered: when did Soviet people begin to organize informal gatherings? How widespread was this phenomenon at the end of the sixties? If

it was an outcome of the Khrushchev Thaw, could it become a permanent feature of Soviet society during the less liberal seventies? Accounts by Soviet emigrés and Western visitors to the Soviet Union do, in fact, confirm that informal groups have become an important part of Soviet social life since the late fifties, especially in the larger cities.<sup>34</sup> But the mere fact that Literaturnaya gazeta decided to publicize the issue gives us grounds for believing that the change in the political mood of the country had become sufficiently profound to qualify as a social phenomenon to be reckoned with.

The decision made by Literaturnaya gazeta to publish these two pieces can be interpreted as an attempt to encourage a public, semi-official acknowledgement of a civil society which was quietly, yet determinedly developing halfway between the dissident world and the socio-political establishment; a kind of 'shadow civil society' which like the 'shadow economy' can coexist with the official system because it satisfies needs which the official system is unable to meet.

Literaturnaya gazeta's 'liberalism' is reflected in its effort to bridge a gap between the spontaneous informal social life of the country and the official world to which it itself belongs. However, in the sixties and seventies, the official world had not changed enough to make the paper feel that it could publicize the discussions taking place in these informal gatherings with impunity.

### 3. A Plea for Diversity and Freedom of Choice

The majority of the articles on leisure activities and informal gatherings call, to various degrees, for a greater respect for the individual's needs, talents and original contribution to the development of society. All individuals are different and, therefore, the recipes for living and blanket solutions offered by official organizations are felt to be, at best insufficient, at worst totally inadequate. The children of the October Revolution, Soviet citizens have now reached adulthood and deem themselves quite capable of making up their own minds. Most of the above-mentioned articles are marked by a strong desire for diversity and freedom of choice.

These two fundamental principles are directly discussed and advocated by the sociologist V. Shlyapentokh - who has since emigrated to the West - in three articles, evocatively entitled 'Everyone Makes Their Own Decisions', 'On the Advantages of Diversity' and 'Forecast for Oneself'.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the previously mentioned authors, Shlyapentokh does not concern himself with one area of life only. His thesis, which is candidly and assertively put forward, constitutes a kind of blueprint for a new, modern Soviet society.

Shlyapentokh argues that it is in human nature to want diversity and freedom of choice, and the inability to satisfy this natural longing inevitably leads to anti-social behaviour and chaos. The basic needs of the Soviet people

have now been met and their new, more sophisticated aspirations require both a diversification of the economy and a more flexible approach to economic planning.

Shlyapentokh's argument is based on the belief that people cannot be forced to do what they do not wish to do. Faced with authoritarian policies, people can always remove their support and cooperation. Why, for instance, should they be gratified to get higher wages when there is so little to buy in shops? The lack of diversity in consumer goods can only undermine the efficiency of material incentives. Individuals can also make certain choices which the authorities cannot stop them from making. For example, thousands of Soviet people have decided to leave the countryside or to migrate to more prosperous parts of the country, thus creating immense economic problems for the government. On the other hand, it can be the case that decisions made by individuals make more sense than those which stem from central planning. Economists, like Perevedentsev, have frequently pointed to some positive aspects of unplanned migration and turnover in industry. After all, a dissatisfied workforce is unlikely to help in increasing productivity.

Shlyapentokh does not call for the end of the plan. His point is that economic planners who obstinately persist in disregarding the aspirations of individuals ironically help to create economic chaos. The social and economic life of the country could be managed infinitely more efficiently if the

plan took into account processes which cannot be fully controlled. Shlyapentokh advocates a 'realistic plan', a plan which will retain its 'leading role' provided that it includes economic forecasts based on seriously undertaken sociological studies of spontaneous social phenomena. In the end, ignoring the will of the people is counterproductive.

Furthermore, when decision-makers actually know what individuals aspire to they find themselves in a better position to influence their choices. Shlyapentokh illustrates his theory taking the example of birth control:

Viewpoints can differ as to the changes which have occurred in the birthrates over the past ten years, but whatever one's opinion one cannot deny that in this area, too, free choice for the individual is a good thing. It may be, indeed, necessary to take measures to encourage people to have more children. However, these measures can have an effect only if they can influence decisions which are taken by the couple with complete freedom.<sup>36</sup>

Shlyapentokh does not speculate on the measures which could influence people's choices in this domain. It is clear, however, that this is how his approach should be understood. If, for instance, research has revealed that women have only one child because of cramped accommodation or inadequate childcare facilities, measures aimed at improving living conditions and the quality of creches and kindergartens are likely to produce an increase in the birthrate.

Shlyapentokh's second main point is that true freedom of choice implies full access to information. At present, he



argues, Soviet people are often in no position to make the best decisions because of the dearth of information in all areas of life, whether it is about deciding where to work and study, arranging an exchange of flats or simply buying consumer goods. In his article, 'Forecast for Oneself', Shlyapentokh calls for the setting up of special services which people would consult before they take important decisions. Society is changing at such a rapid pace that everyone needs fresh information in order to make plans for the future and take decisions which will have a long term impact on their lives.

Literaturnaya gazeta published another article in the sociology section which focuses on the same issue, yet from a slightly different angle.<sup>37</sup> Its author, A. Mendelev, outspokenly discusses the disastrous effects of rumours which regularly spread in Soviet society as a result of insufficient or non-existent information. He openly blames the Soviet media for withholding information or even misinforming the public. When kept in the dark, people are seized with groundless fears or entertain unreasonable hopes. For example, as hardly any information had been given about the recent earthquake in Crimea, many people were alarmed out of all proportion by a rash comment made in a newspaper article, according to which Crimea might be submerged some time during the course of our geological era. Or, as the local paper did not make any comment on the new flats which are being built in the town, all sorts of wild rumours have

spread as to who the beneficiaries of the housing project will be. Mendelev clearly defines what information should be:

Firstly, objective information is essential. Secondly, it must be precise and transmitted in such a way that it can be assimilated as precisely as possible. Thirdly, it must be complete. And finally, information must be timely. Otherwise it can be forestalled by rumours, which always distort reality.<sup>38</sup>

Anxious to emphasize how damaging it is to mislead public opinion, Méndeleev does not hesitate to point out that Western propaganda intentionally spreads rumours in the USSR precisely because it has been recognized as one of the most efficient weapons in psychological warfare. (An interesting comparison which can lead to rather unorthodox theories as to the real intentions of the leadership.) Finally, Mendelev unabashedly advises his compatriots to read the abundant literature which American sovietologists have written on the subject.

Both authors seem to suggest that the leadership should be warned against misjudging the effects of denying Soviet citizens their right to full information. As Shlyapentokh puts it in one of his articles, 'in our century information is a powerful force which can be rather vindictive towards those who do not pay it the attention it deserves'.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The articles which have been here examined greatly

differ from those discussed in chapter 3 inasmuch as they draw a much more optimistic picture of Soviet society. The authors of these articles do not portray their compatriots as submissive and helpless citizens, hopelessly dominated by insensitive bureaucratic institutions. On the contrary, they are capable of evading authoritarian policies or practices, whether they make long-term decisions which run counter to the wishes of central planners or determinedly snub 'collective' activities organized from above.

Furthermore, many of these authors do not only negatively criticize their society, but also put forward new, thought-provoking, often subversive ideas, which can be briefly summarized in this way:

Firstly, the idea of pluralism, which takes the criticism of collectivism examined in the second chapter one step further. The word 'pluralism' was not used at the time, yet the concept is at the centre of several arguments. Grushin, for example, opposes the advocacy of 'cultural levelling' and enthusiastically embraces the idea of 'subcultures'. Shlyapentokh argues that only access to information, freedom of choice and diversity can help to bring some order into the presently chaotic socio-economic life of the country. Although he does not apply his ideas to the political sphere, it is clear that his thesis contains the germ of the idea of 'political pluralism'. Rapoport is the one who touches upon this issue in the most outspoken

manner when he refers to his compatriots' growing 'aspiration to self-expression in politics'.

Secondly, there is an unanimous recognition of the population's disaffection from officially organized activities. There are two explicit accounts of its attempts to find alternatives. Most contributors welcome this development as official clubs do not encourage genuine debates or fulfil any popular expectations. The emerging informal youth culture obviously remains a puzzle for even the liberal section of the older generation, yet on the whole the appearance of informal gatherings is seen as evidence of Soviet citizens' ability to take initiatives and think for themselves.

Most authors seem to urge the leadership, though indirectly, to recognize 'spontaneous social phenomena' and to reckon with them. Shlyapentokh calls for a 'realistic plan' which will take into account social phenomena which cannot be fully controlled. Grushin stresses the need to acknowledge subcultures.

This debate is a good example of how some radical ideas could be expressed at the time in a state-controlled newspaper. Firstly, it is noticeable that the most original ideas are often to be found in articles which are not part of a long debate or a round table. For instance, the discussion on leisure time which contains interesting, albeit moderate, arguments, dragged on for six months while Shlyapentokh's articles and the two pieces on informal gatherings were not

discussed further. Secondly, and more importantly, although harsh criticisms are levelled at Party policies and ideology, political responsibilities are never clearly established. Nowhere is there any criticism of the Party, although, for instance, it is well-known that 'collective' activities, as a rule, are organized or supervised by Party workers.

Finally, the element of continuity in the shaping of ideas between the late sixties and the mid-eighties is striking. Prus's and Rapoport's articles suggest that the explosion of informal organizations following Gorbachev's accession to power was the outcome of a slow process of civic reawakening which might have begun under Khrushchev, yet somehow maintained itself throughout the seventies. Some of the radical ideas which were timidly advanced in the early seventies in certain official publications, such as Literaturnaya gazeta, were taken on board by Gorbachev and his advisers. At the same time it is interesting to see that some of the views which were completely taboo in the official press of the seventies remained difficult to defend under Gorbachev's perestroika. For example, while in the mid-eighties pluralism was officially promoted in civic society and within the ranks of the Party, the communist leadership jealously guarded its political monopoly until it was finally forced to give it up.

It is, nevertheless, clear that the substantial debate which took place in Literaturnaya gazeta, on the many aspects of the relationship between the collective and the

individual, reflected and encouraged important changes in Soviet public opinion in the seventies, at least amongst the liberal middle-classes. It helped to make indefensible the old theory of collectivism which so conveniently justified the supremacy of the collective over the individual, as well as some authoritarian political practices which ensue from it.

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4. V. Tairov, 'A esli ne Moskva?', LG, 1967, No.26, p.12.
5. Kalashnikova, loc. cit.
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8. V. Orlov, 'Romantika cherez tri "r"', LG, 1967, No.9, p.10.
9. B. Anashenkov, 'Khokkei - Vokrug i okolo', LG, 1967, No.9, p.10.
10. M. Zlatogorov, 'Toska "po obydennoy", ili utrachennye kriterii', LG, 1967, No.18, p.15.
11. A. Petrov, 'Uchast' knigi: kontury budushchego', LG, 1971, No.41, p.12.
12. Levada, loc. cit.
13. Ibid.
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17. G. Min'kovskii, '... i trebovatelnost'!', LG, 1969, No.27, p.11; V. Perevedentsev, 'Ot 15 do 24', LG, 1970, No.22, pp.10-11.
18. See also T. Ivanova, 'Esli videt' ne tol'ko plokhoe...', LG, 1969, No.36, pp.10-11: Ivanova suggests that parents take a good look at themselves or their generation, in particular, on the subject of alcoholism.
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## PART THREE

### GROWTH OF CONSUMER AWARENESS

Over the years 67-71 Literaturnaya gazeta published an impressive number of articles which focus on the shortage of consumer goods and adequate services as well as housing problems both in towns and rural areas. (Approximately 300,000 words) The majority of these articles appeared under the all-purpose headline 'Various Themes', others in the pages devoted to economic issues or in special sections on architecture and 'byt' ('everyday life'). They take up more than twice the space allocated to articles which deal with social relations.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the present study is not so much to identify the nature and extent of the practical problems which Soviet people have had to face in their everyday lives. Rather we shall examine the ways in which the issues have been tackled by the various contributors, with the view of assessing to what extent the debate reflects certain shifts in values and expectations.

For decades the Soviet population had been expected to show patience and understanding with regard to the slow improvement of its living conditions. The term 'materialism',

which designates a lofty concept only when it has the good fortune to be 'historical' or 'dialectic', had been otherwise constantly reviled and used to describe either what was seen as a negative tendency in the Soviet Union or the exploitative and utilitarian ethos of the contemptible West, in particular America. As pointed out by O'Dell in her study of Soviet children's literature, 'non-acquisitiveness' has traditionally been one of the virtues promoted by communist morality.<sup>2</sup> The principle, which originally stemmed from the socialist belief in the possibility of achieving equality between members of a community, had been conveniently used by Soviet ideologists as a moral justification for Stalin's economic choices. The emphasis on heavy industry and a reckless pace of industrialization at the expense of a steady increase in standards of living was accompanied by the advocacy of the subordination of personal gratification to what was presented as collective welfare.

However, the notion of collective welfare did not necessarily rule out concerns about the material welfare of individuals. In their study of the Soviet system Bauer and his colleagues argued that even under Stalin the regime was not altogether 'indifferent' to the welfare of the population, as a certain degree of popular support had to be secured in order to achieve rapid industrialization.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, human resources played a crucial role in the pursuit of Stalin's economic and military goals. The extraordinarily rapid pace of capital accumulations required an extremely low

level of consumption amongst the vast majority of the population. Individuals were mostly coerced, but also cajoled into making sacrifices.

The above-mentioned authors also pointed out that the leadership's economic and military programmes 'come first as long as the morale of the people does not become so low as to threaten these programmes'.<sup>4</sup> It seems that after Stalin's death the leadership began to recognize that Soviet citizens' endurance could not be tried any further and acknowledged the need to redress the balance between coercion and rewards. Malenkov's call for greater expenditure on consumer goods testified to this new realization. While in the thirties and forties it was argued that collective welfare meant, first of all, the development of a solid economic basis which would eventually lead to an improvement of living conditions, the notion was redefined by Stalin's successors, who could not do otherwise than acknowledge the limited human capacity for self-sacrifice.

However, Malenkov's policies designed to increase the output of consumer goods failed and his successors did not introduce any drastic economic reforms that could have resulted in a high rise in consumption levels.<sup>5</sup> Even under Brezhnev, the leadership's awareness of the population's dissatisfaction with low standards of living did not result in the promotion of a radically new conception of socialism.<sup>6</sup>

In his book, Socialist Culture and Man, A.I. Arnoldov points out that one of the most important conclusions drawn

by the XXV Congress of the CPSU was 'the growth of the "human factor" in society's affairs'. He then quotes two extracts from official documents which make it perfectly clear that the idea of the 'human factor' must not undermine the traditional communist virtues, such as discipline and love of work:

Socialism is a society of real humanism. Its chief value is the working man. Everything for the benefit of man, for the sake of man - this is the basic meaning of the new socialist way of life.<sup>7</sup>

Comrades, we are not building a land of idlers where rivers flow with milk and honey, but the most organized and industrious society in human history. And the people living in that society will be highly industrious, organized and politically conscious.<sup>8</sup>

The new emphasis on the need to improve the population's well-being was not to imply either the abandonment of more 'noble goals' or radical changes in economic priorities. The leadership's newly professed commitment to improve the population's material welfare was not to be seen as a concession to the inevitably divisive materialistic ethos. The Soviets were to remain a nation of producers and social activists fighting for the common cause.

The great number of articles on the lack of material comfort seems to indicate that in reality the need for a better standard of living figured high in the list of Soviet people's priorities. Were the participants in the debate simply showing a legitimate concern for the slow, yet steady,

improvement of the situation? Or were such contributions to be interpreted as a reflection of 'negative materialistic tendencies'? What is materialism? The question is actually directly addressed in a series of articles (approximately 38,000 words) which show that the officially sponsored contemptuous attitude toward what had been for years labelled 'negative materialistic tendencies' was already at the time being regarded with increasing suspicion.

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## VI. THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF MATERIALISM

The debate on materialism was triggered off by the account of a round table presided over by Evg. Bogat and Yu. Timofeev, which involved the participation of a number of writers, sociologists and philosophers on the subject of 'Youth - Ethics - 20th Century'.<sup>1</sup> Accounts of round tables tend to lack concision, as the vagueness of the themes encourages participants to launch themselves on their pet subjects with little regard for the concerns expressed by their colleagues. This account is no exception, yet two main points frequently recur in one form or another. Firstly, Soviet young people suffer from boredom and 'veshchizm' (from the Russian word 'veshch' meaning 'thing'), i.e. a compulsive desire to acquire consumer goods. Secondly, this behaviour stems from the older generation's failure to instil respect for human values, such as honesty, truth, kindness and justice, in their children. Sickened by the discrepancy between words and deeds, between what they read in books or hear from the media and what they see adults do, young people take refuge in crude and immoderate materialism. This discussion later develops into two main debates. The first pits those who champion 'disinterestedness' (beskorystie) against those who argue for a positive type of materialism ('ratsionalizm'). The second debate considers the pros and cons of consumerism. First of all, however, we shall look at the very few articles on bribery and theft of state property,

which explicitly illustrate the discrepancy between words and deeds mentioned in the introductory debate and give an insight into one aspect of the discussion on materialism.

#### 1. Widespread Corruption: The Dark Side of Materialism

Bribery and theft of state property did not receive a great deal of attention in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta over the years 1967-71. A number of isolated cases are discussed in the pages devoted to legal matters and court cases. Very few articles, however, tackle these issues in broader terms. The three pieces on bribery to be examined here were published under the headline 'Various Themes', the article on theft property in the section 'The Individual, The Collective and Society'. They are not directly connected with the debate on materialism, yet unintentionally emphasize the highly materialistic nature of everyday Soviet life.

In her article on theft of state property, V. Eliseeva briefly reports back on a round table organized by Literaturnaya gazeta which involved lawyers and officials from the Ministry for the Protection of Social Order.<sup>2</sup> While agreeing that the economic loss, which is already known to be great, needs to be precisely calculated - there are no national figures yet - she is herself more concerned with the 'immeasurable' moral damage resulting from such practices. As theft of state property is tolerated by the general public, as well as by managers and judges, double moral standards have emerged, which have disastrous effects on the moral



upbringing of the young. Take, for instance, this twelve-year-old girl who accuses her mother of hypocrisy as she teaches her to be honest while she herself does not mind feeding her family with stolen meat. And what about this teenager who cannot understand why her parents are so horrified by her stealing from a woman's handbag? After all, her mother regularly brings back food from the stolovaya (cheap restaurant) where she is employed and her father, a T.V. repair man, moonlights using material from work.

Eliseeva's tone is not particularly self-righteous. She is anxious to present the twelve-year-old girl's mother as a good, hard-working academic and parent, who, regrettably, saw the arrangement about the meat as merely practical and failed to realize her daughter's confusion. Nor does Eliseeva advocate more repressive measures and harsher sentences. Rather she calls for better management of enterprises and, above all, an open discussion which would increase public awareness of the perverse effect of these practices on the social climate.

The three articles on bribery also condemn the high level of complacency amongst the population. In the same way as theft of state property is often not perceived as 'real theft', what should be plainly called 'bribery' is still considered by many as a respectable way of thanking someone for a favour. The writer B. Rymar' sees in this attitude a modern version of the old Russian custom of 'podnoshenie' by which expensive presents were given to those whose help or

protection was sought after.<sup>3</sup> Besides, the bribe does not always take the form of money. In a short humorous piece, A. Sukontsev turns his attention to the sad fate of officials, supervisors and inspectors of all kinds who cannot do other than agree to be lavishly fed and entertained before they are allowed to get on with their inspections. The fact that they have accepted the hospitality of their hosts makes it all the more difficult to refuse them the favour they inevitably ask. It is a well rehearsed scenario, which some enjoy and others resent as it makes a mockery of their work. Sukontsev relates the case of a dedicated and determined official who, in order to evade any pressure, systematically presents a medical note falsely certifying that he suffers from a stomach ulcer, to those whose work he has come to inspect.<sup>4</sup>

All the contributors unambiguously describe corruption as a widespread phenomenon that can be observed amongst people from all walks of life. In some enterprises workers regularly grease the manager's palm to secure themselves substantial bonuses. Members of the public in need of some document resignedly help officials to supplement their incomes. Articles on corruption are few and far between, yet their authors cannot be accused of minimizing the extent of the problem. Not only do they vehemently voice their indignation at the high degree of corruption, but also, like Yurii Trifonov's characters, they seem weary of having to live in so insalubrious a social climate.

However, the import of their criticism is considerably weakened by their failure to analyse the causes of corruption. Eliseeva does argue briefly that if enterprises were better managed, opportunities for theft of state property would be greatly reduced. Yet her approach remains predominantly moralistic, even though she appears more willing than Rymar', for example, to make allowances for the hardships of everyday life.

None of the contributors recognizes that people need to resort to corrupt practices in order to obtain goods and services that they need. Studies have shown, Eliseeva is anxious to point out, that bad management rather than 'need' (nuzhda) accounts for the high level of theft in enterprises. Workers just pick up spare parts and material which happen to be lying about unattended. It is thus assumed, presumably, that workers do not 'need' to moonlight.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Rymar', who to begin with insists that 'podnoshenie' and bribery are practised by everyone, later unwittingly contradicts himself by arguing that bribes are more likely to be taken by high wage earners - yet more proof that need and corruption are unrelated. The reluctance to establish a link between corruption and the impossibility of meeting certain needs through the regular channels leads Rymar' and Sukontsev, in particular, to the somewhat surprising conclusion that the bribe-givers, rather than the bribe-takers, should be held responsible for the high degree of corruption.<sup>6</sup>

Should we agree to confine the issue to a question of morality, the stance taken by these authors appears rather dubious. They are certainly correct in underlining that mass participation in the vicious circle of corruption ensures its continuation. But it is debatable whether it is 'morally right' to disregard the different forms and levels of corruption. The debate over how to define the notions of 'need' and 'greed' has always been a controversial one. When does 'need' become 'greed'? Answers can differ widely depending on the socio-economic development of the society, its cultural ethos or the moral values of particular individuals. It seems, however, a shocking injustice that those who resort to corrupt practices to feed their families should be lumped together with those who handle large sums of illicit roubles. Furthermore, a blanket condemnation of corruption fails to distinguish between individual and collective responsibility with the result that organizations, ministries, and in the end, the political leadership are let off the hook.

It is, however, unlikely that redistributing the blame according to the nature or extent of the corruption will help finding ways of putting an end to it. The major weakness of these contributions lies in their authors' failure to analyse the socio-economic and political reasons for the ubiquity of corruption. Does Rymar' really believe that 'ideological work' amongst the masses will remove the problem while food shortages continue to be acute and administrative methods of

management take the place of viable economic mechanisms? Furthermore, these authors' moralizing approach seems to imply a refusal to acknowledge the legitimate desire of Soviet citizens to improve their conditions of living. All in all, notwithstanding the open and harsh criticism of widespread corruption, these contributions belong to a conservative discourse.

## 2. Materialism and Socialism: A Contradiction in Terms?

The limited scope of the articles on corruption partly stems from the fact that they were isolated contributions. The paper made no attempt to organize a real debate, which, in itself, is indicative of the restraints to which it was subjected. On the other hand, the broader issue of materialism, i.e. the attitude of mind of those who place a great deal of importance on financial rewards, possessions and material comforts, was continuously discussed in one form or another during the five years examined in this study. The first debate spread over a period of ten months from March 1967 to January 1968 with a couple of loosely related contributions in 1971. It consists of a dozen or so articles which highlight a clearly polarized controversy between those who consider materialism to be an objectionable petty bourgeois attitude (meshchanstvo) and those who see in it a legitimate aspiration, as well as a 'rational' way of organizing - or rather re-organizing - Soviet society.

The terms of the debate are laid down by Evg. Bogat in an introductory article published under the headline 'Discussion Club' in the section 'The Individual, the Collective and Society'.<sup>7</sup> Bogat comments upon a letter from a worker correspondent whose story about a joiner who refused payment for toys he had made for a nursery school was turned down by the factory newspaper. He was told by the editor that workers were not in the least interested in hearing about the merits of unpaid work, and was advised to direct his attention instead to employees whose performance had improved as a result of higher material incentives. While not disputing that good work ought to be generously rewarded, the worker correspondent disagrees that everything can be measured in financial terms and calls for the promotion of such values as 'disinterestedness' (beskorystie).

Bogat places this letter within the framework of a more general debate which was obviously taking place in other publications and outside the media world. The editor of the factory newspaper, Bogat surmises, would certainly enjoy the support of the 'rationalists', like this young sociologist who, little impressed by the joiner's good deed, declared that the country did not need noble sentiments so much as good policies aimed at solving its economic problems; and, after all, material comforts make life so much nicer. Bogat also refers to a recently published book, Ekonomika morali i moral' ekonomiki, in which its author, N. Alekseev, argues that in a socialist society moral incentives can have an

impact 'only in connection with material ones'. Bogat objects to the word 'only'.

On the whole his position is a moderate one. Indeed he calls for a more 'rationally' organized society, capable, nevertheless, of accommodating such values as 'disinterestedness'. Most people, he continues, are neither complete rationalists nor complete romantics. They aspire to a more comfortable standard of living while knowing perfectly well that money is not everything. Interestingly enough, Bogat seems anxious to dissociate himself from diehard Stalinist propagandists as he makes it clear that 'disinterestedness' does not necessarily imply an 'ascetic' life style nor 'self-sacrifice'. Yet a rationally organized socialist society must remain humane and compassionate. Marxists know that happiness lies in 'the harmony of the spiritual, the material and the moral'.

The debate is greatly radicalized by the next two contributions made by A. Yanov and L. Zhukhovitskii.<sup>8</sup> Yanov criticizes Bogat for setting economics against ethics. Economic rationalism does not lead to selfishness and greed, but rather ensures an 'honest', 'anti-dogmatic', 'truthful' and 'democratic' approach to the organization of society. He substantiates his argument with two examples. The first one, which amusingly enough is drawn from a novel, illustrates what is happening, yet should not be happening, although it is the attitude promoted by official ideology and numerous works of fiction. The heroine of I. Lavrov's short novel,

Ocharovannaya, in her capacity as chairperson of a sovkhov (state farm), decides to take on 217 young people on the only basis that they cannot find work anywhere else in the village. As in reality the sovkhov is in no position to provide them with steady, qualified and well paid jobs, the chairperson's decision, Yanov argues, only makes 'parasites' out of these young people. And 'this is indeed', he whimsically ponders, 'totally disinterested parasitism, yet the sovkhov is none the better for it'. Neither are the 217 young people in question. The seemingly noble deed performed by the chairperson of the sovkhov turned out to be counterproductive and, in the end, unethical.

Yanov compares this fictional case with that of the chairman of a real kolkhoz (collective farm) who, in order to stop young people from leaving the village, has concluded formal agreements with school leavers by which they are guaranteed attractive salaries, comfortable accommodation in hostels and adequate services in return for their genuinely needed work. Yanov draws the conclusion that rational decisions, which must be dictated by concrete social and economic demands, are bound to be humane as they benefit both the enterprise or the farm and the employees. Good economics is ethical. Thus Yanov has redefined the terms of the debate by demonstrating that the choice is not to be made between 'rationalism' and 'disinterestedness', but rather between 'rationalism' and 'demagogy', between 'realism' and 'scholasticism'.



Yanov discusses the issue of materialism in the framework of a broader debate on the country's economy and questions several principles on which the system is based. Obviously the article does not contain all the answers (Does the rationalization of the economy imply tolerating a certain level of unemployment?), nor does it ask all the questions. However, on the issue of materialism Yanov's message comes out loud and clear. He displays no nostalgia for the supposedly revolutionary romanticism of the Stalin era when non-acquisitiveness and 'disinterestedness' were regarded as socialist virtues and the willingness to sacrifice one's material comfort as a measure of one's commitment to the cause. Yanov plainly recognizes workers' legitimate materialistic concerns and aspirations to a more prosperous life. In fact, he fiercely denounces managers who call workers dissatisfied with their wages 'self-seekers' ('rvach') or scroungers (khapuga). These managers are hypocrites who use outmoded propaganda in order to conceal their own incompetence and inability to secure decent wages for their workforce.

Yanov clearly rejects the principle of egalitarianism which inspired several measures taken by the Khrushchev and Brezhnev administrations in order to reduce wide wage differentials which had been inherited from the Stalin era. Referring back to the joiner of Bogat's article, Yanov remarks that 'social production is no kindergarten. It is

based on the principle: from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work'.<sup>9</sup>

This position is taken one step further by L. Zhukhovitskii, a supporter of Yanov in the debate, who forcefully defends the privately hired teams of construction workers, known in Russian as 'shabashniki' and other lucrative individual initiatives.<sup>10</sup> The shabashniki are one of the favourite targets of the 'anti-meshchanin' (or anti-petty bourgeois) lobby, which presents them as unprincipled individualists whose only concern is to earn 'easy money'. On the contrary, Zhukhovitskii pays tribute to their high quality work and dedication. They do not mind putting in a fourteen-hour day's work, unlike state enterprise workers, who spend their long smoking breaks, Zhukhovitskii sarcastically comments, criticizing these 'petty bourgeois' who are prepared to do anything for a rouble, even work hard.

Not only does Zhukhovitskii unambiguously support the principle of performance-related wages, but he implies very heavily that workers who sell their labour on the private market are more likely to work well than state employees. Although he does not go so far as to advocate a market economy, he makes no secret of his attachment to the kolkhoz market. He recalls how a few years ago old age pensioners who sold their fruit and vegetables at the market were accused of petty bourgeois tendencies. Why should we be opposed to their selling the 'fruit of their labour', Zhukhovitskii wonders, when it is in the interests of both the government and the

people that more food should be produced? It might be, indeed, preferable that their produce be brought to a cooperative rather than straight to the kolkhoz market, but, after all, the market is not a 'shameful place'.

Zhukhovitskii seems to think that the political and moral condemnation of individual commercial enterprise and financial gratification has only served to make people 'contemptuous of work'. In the end, he turns back the criticisms of the 'anti-shabashniki' lobby upon passive, lazy workers who, he argues, are those lacking in a sense of civic responsibility. He also argues that the notion of 'meshchanstvo' has become redundant in the debate on negative social tendencies. Those who hinder the development of society are bureaucrats, careerists, time-servers, swindlers and work-shy workers.

The shabashniki are once again wholeheartedly supported in the course of the debate, this time by Yurii Sotnik in an article directed at Larisa Kryachko, who had sharply criticized Zhukhovitskii's ideas.<sup>11</sup>

Kryachko's contribution is a rather clumsy and inconsistent attempt to examine the question of the shabashniki from a Marxist-Leninist point of view. Refuting Zhukhovitskii's assertion that the notion of 'petty bourgeois tendencies' has become irrelevant in analysing contemporary Soviet society, she warns readers against the growing tendency to judge people according to moral standards irrespective of socio-economic criteria, thus failing to

acknowledge the existence of class or ideological contradictions. The ethical code of a society, she reminds us, is determined by the nature of its economic system and property relations. For a socialist, for instance, capitalists cannot be good or bad. They are exploiters, therefore bad. Her portrait of the meshchanin in Soviet society turns out to be very similar to that of the 'petty bourgeois' who in a competitive capitalist environment, she argues, has no alternative but to fend for himself at the expense of others. He is a cynical and intolerant individual, obsessed with consumer goods and unaware of his responsibilities towards society. Are we, then, to understand that Soviet workers who sell their labour outside the state-controlled channel are to be automatically accused of petty bourgeois tendencies?

As a matter of fact, when it comes to assessing the social role of the shabashniki, Kryachko no longer finds economic criteria sufficient. On the one hand she obviously disapproves of a free labour market and its advantages for certain categories of workers. On the other, she recognizes that state enterprises genuinely need to hire labour outside the official channel. In the end, she herself resorts to moral criteria and differentiates between bad and good shabashniki. The bad ones are those who sell their labour not so much to satisfy a need as their greed. She does not give any indication, however, as to where to draw the line between need and greed.

Sotnik harshly criticizes Kryachko's attempt to distinguish between different types of shabashniki according to what he sees as spurious moral criteria. Leaving aside the question of greed, he wonders, in particular, what is so 'principled' about those workers who travel long distances to earn a living for the simple reason that they cannot do so in their own areas. In fact need is at the root of their initiative.

Sotnik rejects Kryachko's arguments on both moral and economic grounds. Material incentives, he argues, should cease to be regarded as immoral. After all, is it not the case that the economic reform advocates a combination of moral and material incentives in order to increase productivity and workers' commitment to their work? Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that shabashniki play a positive role in the economy as they help fulfil the plan on time. This argument echoes Yanov's belief that good economics is ethical.

At the economic and political levels Sotnik disagrees that any comparison can be drawn between the phenomenon of the shabashniki and capitalist economic mechanisms as these workers do not own the means of production or the product of their labour, nor do they exploit anyone else's work.

The last contribution in the debate was published nearly five months later as if Literaturnaya gazeta toyed with the idea of leaving the last word to Sotkin. F. Kuznetsov's moderately conservative piece contains a conventional

analysis of 'petty bourgeois tendencies' in a socialist society.<sup>12</sup> Like Kryachko, he believes that there is a need to carry on the fight against these negative tendencies, which he sees, however, as a normal phenomenon in the process of the building of socialism. Firstly, he argues, it would be unreasonable to expect that the 'petty bourgeois psychology', which the young Russian working class has inherited from pre-Revolutionary Russia, could have been eradicated in only five decades. Secondly, petty bourgeois tendencies will continue to exist as long as socialism will not be able to guarantee full equality between all Soviet citizens.

Kuznetsov does not discuss the role of the shabashniki in particular. Yet, it seems to follow from his analysis that they should be regarded as an inevitable phenomenon which ideological work alone will not help to eradicate. Perhaps are we even to understand that these workers might be fulfilling a useful role at this stage in the development of socialism. After all, not only does not he adopt Kryachko's moralistic approach, but agrees that Zhukhovitskii and Sotkin are right in thinking that 'good people' are too often wrongly accused of showing 'petty bourgeois tendencies'.

It could be argued that this debate remains within the conventional bounds of the official dogma. As Shlapentokh remarks in his study of Soviet ideology, the Party has always recognized the importance of both material and moral incentives in order to encourage diligent work, even though

the leaders have favoured one approach over the other to different degrees.<sup>13</sup> But, in fact, the discussion on 'petty bourgeois tendencies' and the more specific question of the shabashniki highlights the convenient inconsistency of the official dogma and polarizes the debate by explicitly opposing two notions which official ideology has tried very hard to describe as complementary.

The debate has far reaching implications for how socialism should be defined. Two very different attitudes of mind have emerged from it. On the one hand, those who could be called the 'traditionalists' cling to the notions of 'disinterestedness' and non-acquisitiveness, which they see as unquestionable socialist values. On the other, the 'rationalists' refute the belief that materialistic aspirations and self-interest are necessarily divisive, therefore un-socialist. The 'rationalists' clearly state that the refusal to recognize the legitimacy of materialistic aspirations has resulted in a lack of commitment on the part of the workforce. It is also heavily hinted that the promotion of 'disinterestedness' can conceal the exploitation of labour by the state. Not only do these authors highlight the discrepancy between high popular expectations and low standards of living, but they openly argue that the whole of society could benefit from initiatives taken by individualists out of self-interest.

The rationalists vehemently reject the criticism of their opponents who indirectly suspect them of leaning

towards capitalism. The shabashniki, they argue, contribute to the smooth running of the socialist economy and do not exploit anyone else's labour. It is clear, however, that the rationalists do put forward ideas which challenge the extreme centralization of the system. From a more Western perspective, it could be argued that some statements made by the rationalists smack of right-wing politics. Western trade-unionists and socialists, for instance, might not share Zhukhovitskii's enthusiasm for workers who are prepared to put in a fourteen-hour day's work. The theme of 'greed' is cautiously avoided and the rationalists' stance against egalitarianism is never balanced by the advocacy of policies aimed at containing wage differentials.

The purpose of these remarks is not to question the socialist convictions of these authors, but rather to point out that all contributors, both traditionalists and rationalists, suffer from the narrow constraints of the official dogma. Traditionalists, whether they are cynics interested in maintaining the status quo or puritanical socialists sincerely committed to the collectivist ethos, seem incapable of changing their way of thinking to accommodate the evidently growing materialistic concerns of their compatriots. Rationalists are so eager to demonstrate how materialistic aspirations can play a positive role in the life of the country that they show little concern for the potentially divisive consequences of an unqualified promotion of self-interest. Their approach is reminiscent of those who



are so preoccupied with the idea of defending the individual against the collective that they do not ask themselves where the line should be drawn between individual initiative and individualistic behaviour. Yet the rationalists have made a breach in the official line by challenging the equation between materialism and capitalism.

Yanov's plea for a more rationalist approach to the organization of society triggered off another type of reaction from a couple of observers interested in the moral rather than the economic implications of his argument. While agreeing with Yanov's basic idea that the economic life of the country needs rationalizing, these authors are anxious to express their misgivings about an already existing form of rationalism which tends to vindicate the superiority of 'reason' over 'feelings'. The critic Izabella Solov'eva, for instance, complains that these rationalists, the young Turks of the technical intelligentsia, are relentless workaholics (not to be compared with careerists, though), incapable of 'love, kindness, sensitivity, civic spirit' and, in the end, 'happiness'.<sup>14</sup> The writer Sergei Bondarin returns to the attack a few weeks later, adding a jingoistic note to the argument as he declares that all the high technology of soulless America can be no substitute for the traditionally rich cultural and spiritual life of the Russian people.<sup>15</sup>

Bondarin's readiness to play down the importance of the country's technological backwardness is somewhat suspicious. Not all contributors, however, appear to be guided by

ulterior motives when expressing their concern for the aridity of the social climate. A round table of writers organized in 1971 around the theme 'Are our feelings becoming impoverished?' shows that a clearly more progressive section of Soviet public opinion was aware of the limitations and, perhaps, danger of too much rationalism and materialism.<sup>16</sup>

The participants in the round table were asked to comment upon a letter from an engineer who seems to fit Solov'eva's portrait of the typical 'rationalist' perfectly, as shown by the following extract:

Man is the product of his time. Our epoch requires, above all, efficiency of us. So there is no point in moaning about people being more rational and dryer than their fathers and grandfathers. There is nothing to gain in being emotional. In fact, emotions are costly not only for ourselves, but for all those around us.<sup>17</sup>

It is difficult for a foreign observer to pin down what exactly is being discussed here. Is this reluctance to get emotionally involved in the affairs of the country a reaction against the ill-fated effects of the alleged enthusiasm of the twenties and thirties, or is it the aftermath of the Thaw, which has rekindled new hopes, yet left them unfulfilled? Several contributions point to the low morale of the population. Another reader deplores the now fashionable 'ironic' approach to life and wishes for a better balance between 'reason' and 'feelings'.<sup>18</sup> A participant in the round table speaks of 'spiritual inertia'. Many others, however, seem to believe that the cynicism which is often

associated with rationalism tends to be exaggerated and that society will benefit from a more materialistic approach. It is, perhaps, the writer Vasilii Aksenov who defines the problem with the greatest clarity when he argues that however needed logic and rationalism are, they are no substitutes for 'moral values and a sense of dignity'.<sup>19</sup> This fear that material values might be wrongly expected to fill the moral vacuum can also be observed in the more specific debate on consumerism, which will be examined next.

### 3 'What Do We Need Transistors For?'

Obviously the issue of consumerism is an integral part of the more general debate on materialism and, therefore, is frequently referred to in most of the contributions examined in this chapter. There are, however, half a dozen articles (approximately 12,000 words) which concentrate on this particular aspect of materialism.

This short debate was triggered off by Evg. Bogat's article, 'Feelings and Things', already mentioned in the section on the emergence of informal gatherings.<sup>20</sup> The gist of Bogat's argument is that in spite of the socialist nature of the economic system and, in particular, the absence of private property, Soviet citizens have become obsessed with consumer goods and lost interest in communicating with one another. It seems that not only 'reason' and 'rationalism', but also 'things' have pushed 'feelings' away, thus contributing to the degradation of social relations.

Not all contributors, however, share Bogat's pessimistic view of Soviet society, nor do they necessarily disapprove of its growing consumerist tendencies. Three articles deserve particular attention inasmuch as they highlight three clearly different positions on the pros and cons of consumerism. The most orthodox argument is put forward by G. Volkov, a reader at the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU.<sup>21</sup>

Volkov does not partake in the discussion directly. Published approximately six months after Bogat set off the debate, his contribution is, in fact, a shortened version of a theoretical article meant for the journal Voprosy filosofii, in which he analyses the contrasting functions of consumer goods in socialist and capitalist societies.

In socialist society, Volkov argues, production of goods is an end in itself, while Man is seen merely as a means to increase material wealth. On the other hand, the aim of socialist society is to achieve the all-round development of Man, while material production constitutes only one aspect of society's wealth. Volkov's argument reaches embarrassing levels of sophistry when he argues 1) that only in socialist society does science aim at increasing not only the production of goods, but also the quality of services, education, economic management, of all that makes up a society; 2) that only in socialist society is Man's creativity allowed to thrive as work requires an increasingly high level of theoretical knowledge.

Volkov's crude piece of propaganda, which not surprisingly combines an oversimplistic portrayal of capitalist society with an idealized vision of socialism, fails to tackle the central issue in the debate on consumerism. Nowhere is it even hinted that the Soviet population might have become unreasonably preoccupied with the acquisition of consumer goods. Yet Volkov's article is not completely devoid of interest as it opportunely highlights the great importance attached to economic growth and material welfare by official ideologists. Successive leaders have repeatedly asserted that socialism would catch up with the West and eventually overtake it in its pursuit of economic and technical progress, the assumption being that material abundance coupled with equality cannot be socially divisive. Neither can it corrupt, as in the socialist society, Volkov reminds us, material wealth is only one aspect of Man's development.

It is possible that Volkov's reluctance to address the issue of consumerism might have stemmed, at least partly, from the ambiguity of the official position on the question of material wealth. On the one hand, the Soviet population has always been urged to show patience and restraint not only because the economy cannot deliver the goods, but, equally importantly, because the materialistic ethos, inevitably divisive in a society still riddled with inequalities, cannot be allowed to replace more noble goals which are expected to mobilize the whole of society around its unifying force,

namely the Party. On the other hand, great emphasis has always been placed on material welfare not only because the leadership needs to secure some degree of popular support, but also because the idea itself is, indeed, part and parcel of the socialist dream.

It is in the light of the official dogma that the subversiveness of I. Klyamkin's contribution can be fully appreciated.<sup>22</sup> Like Bogat, the journalist Klyamkin disapproves of veshchism, deplores the 'petty bourgeois' mentality of his compatriots who see the acquisition of consumer goods as an end in itself, or even worse, as a way of showing off their social status and the advantages which go with it. This is not, however, the most provocative part of Klyamkin's reasoning. Indeed, it is not unusual to come across the argument that socio-economic inequalities are to be expected at this early stage in the development of socialism. Klyamkin drastically departs from the official dogma when he argues that the rampant materialism of Soviet society is, in fact, the outcome of an excessive faith in the benefits of economic growth:

We are somehow used to thinking that economic progress and growth of material welfare will inevitably lead to moral progress... But it's not that simple. There isn't a direct cause and effect link [between economic and moral progress]. There might even be contradictions between the two.<sup>23</sup>

Articles whose authors complain about the moral and intellectual inferiority of their fellow citizens are not a

rare occurrence in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta. It is a concern which figures prominently in the debate on leisure activities. Orlov and Zhukhovitskii, for example, do not believe that an increase in the number of clubs is likely to enhance the quality of their compatriots' leisure time. It is a 'problem of personality', they argue, and the right conditions should be created in order to ensure the 'harmonious development of the individual', so everyone can enjoy a 'rich spiritual life'. In another article published in the pedagogy section, the same Zhukhovitskii points out that economic prosperity is not a guarantee of happiness as shown by the high suicide rate in Sweeden and the ever increasing incidence of crime in the USA. Only a serious 'aesthetic education', he continues, can lead to the full moral and intellectual development of the individual. The key to 'spiritual wealth' lies in the arts and the teaching of the humanities, a principle which, sadly, no longer governs the country's education system.<sup>24</sup>

On the surface these authors' aversion to materialism echoes official ideologists' regular attacks against capitalism. In this respect it is unclear whether the occasional publication by Literaturnaya gazeta of Western left-wing authors critical of the consumer society should be seen only as part of a propaganda exercise. At the same time, it would be a mistake to dismiss the subversiveness of these authors altogether as they do not confine their criticism of materialism to the capitalist world. On the contrary, they

denounce the existence of similar tendencies in their own society and blame the Soviet system for not honouring its pledge to create the 'New Man'. The official dogma's insistence on economic growth has produced the same materialistic tendencies as in the West.

It is ironic that economic growth should be perceived as an obstacle in the way of the moral, spiritual and intellectual development of the population both in affluent societies and in a country where economic prosperity has remained a mere promise. The anti-consumer society movement was evidence of a socio-political and moral malaise in both types of societies. The fact remains that, applied to the Soviet Union, the argument has the disadvantage of conveniently overlooking the harsh realities of everyday life caused by acute shortages of the very consumer goods which the population is allegedly obsessed with.

The most refreshing contribution on consumerism is an article entitled 'What do we need transistors for?' by a woman whose occupation is not specified.<sup>25</sup> Possibly a journalist, L. Zhilina begins by appearing to pay lip service to official ideology, reiterating Volkov's argument that the role of consumer goods in the socialist society drastically differs from the role they play in a capitalist environment. In the socialist society 'things' do not enslave individuals, nor do they serve as a yardstick to measure their worth. 'The same level of consumption', she cautiously reasserts, 'has completely different social, ideological and psychological



consequences for the individual under socialism and under capitalism'. However, unlike Volkov, she does not bury the issue in a broader ideological debate, but instead lays a great deal of emphasis on the idea that socialism 'seeks to make available an abundance of goods'. This is not in itself a controversial view. Yet, by referring in some detail to a sociological survey on attitudes towards consumer goods, Zhilina seems anxious to impress upon her readers that the problem needs immediate attention.

Zhilina's article is really intended for those who question the merits of economic growth and deplores the materialistic aspirations of their compatriots. Unlike Klyamkin, Zhilina does not set economic affluence against 'spiritual' growth. Her purpose is to rehabilitate the value of 'things' and destroy the myth according to which Soviet people would be unhealthily concerned with their acquisition. She agrees that the majority of people do care about consumer goods. Only 17 out of the 1740 families interviewed in Chelyabinsk said they had no interest in them. But consumer goods contribute to the 'spiritual' and intellectual growth of the population. More than 50% of the families interviewed said that the acquisition of domestic appliances, such as washing machines, had led to an increase in their leisure time, while other items, such as television, radio and books, had been instrumental in broadening their horizons by providing them with essential information and good quality entertainment. Zhilina even approves, albeit

timidly, of more frivolous concerns, like having fashionable clothes and a beautifully furnished flat.

Finally, she admits that some people, though a minority, do see consumer goods as ends in themselves. However, she does not think that the solution to the eradication of 'petty bourgeois materialism' ('meshchanstvo') lies in the rejection of 'things', the merits of which must be acknowledged. What is needed is a serious, open and honest debate on the function of consumer goods.

This attitude is also shared by the poetess Maya Borisova, who in the course of the already mentioned round table on the theme 'Are our feelings becoming impoverished?', takes the defence of the supposedly materialistic younger generation. Borisova does not find young people 'more mercenary than their parents were at their age', and does not consider their greater interest in consumer goods as necessarily a bad thing:

It is often the case that these purchases are not a sign of their affluence, but rather a reflection of their inner needs. I know people who possess only one suit, yet own a car because they like travelling and therefore a car is more useful to them than a suit ...<sup>26</sup>

The idea of enjoying owning an object for the sake of it is still anathema! Yet Zhilina and Borisova's appeal for a more consumer-oriented society constitutes a major departure from both orthodox and unorthodox criticisms of materialism.

#### 4. Conclusion

Whereas the debate on collectivism reveals a clear bias against the official dogma, there seems to be less of a consensus of opinions on the question of materialism. The issue, obviously, is a trickier one.

According to the standard theory, economic growth and material welfare constitute an integral part of socialism, yet the level of material wealth and its distribution amongst the population are determined and controlled by the state. Individual initiatives and self-interest are associated with greed and capitalism. It is fine to enjoy the consumer goods made available by the socialist economy, but acquisitiveness is frowned upon.

The 'rationalist' argument, which is given a fair amount of publicity in Literaturnaya gazeta, champions some of the very principles traditionally associated with capitalism. It is true that Marxism-Leninism has always been flexible enough to reconcile the need for anti-egalitarian economic policies during the 'transition period' towards communism with the promotion of non-acquisitiveness, thus conveniently legitimizing the subordination of individual aspirations to collective economic priorities as defined by the political leadership. But the proponents of the 'rationalist' argument do not quite remain within the conventional Marxist-Leninist boundaries. The need for performance-related wages and financial incentives is not advocated as a mere economic

expedient. It is perceived as being dictated by human nature, with self-interest at the root of the motivation process.

These ideas are subversive for two reasons. Firstly, they involve an outspoken criticism of current practices and the promotion of certain principles, such as 'disinterestedness', which, it is argued, often conceal bad management and exploitation of the labour force. Secondly, these ideas go against principles and practices traditionally seen as being part and parcel of socialism. In the same way as the defence of the individual against the collective questions the validity of the collectivist ethos, the 'rationalist' argument contains the seeds of a debate on the nature of socialism.

Some contributors, however, seem to be reluctant 'rationalists'. While agreeing with the economic necessity of introducing material incentives, they shudder to think what it might do to the moral health of the nation; hence, for example, a desperate and clumsy attempt to distinguish between good and bad shabashniki, and more generally, an underlying suspicion that, while all this 'rationalism' might be necessary, it is likely to reinforce the already existing tendency towards selfish materialism.

While placing a great deal of emphasis on self-interest, individual initiative and financial incentives, the 'rationalists' do not seem particularly interested in a consumer-oriented society. Zhukhovitskii, for instance, vehemently defends the shabashniki whose high incomes, he

argues, are fully justified by the high quality of their work. On the other hand, he is critical of the materialistic West and laments the 'spiritual' poverty of his compatriots, warning them against the danger of an excessive concern with consumer goods.

It is tempting to argue that those who so eagerly criticize what they label 'petty bourgeois' materialism, are playing into the hands of a government which cannot deliver the goods. But it is not so simple. The leadership has, in fact, permitted a public discussion to take place on the need for more and better consumer goods since the early fifties. In her case study on Novyi mir (1952-1958) E. R. Frankel speaks of the 'economic thaw' which began in the summer of 1953 when articles demanding more and better consumer goods appeared both in Novyi mir and Literaturnaya gazeta. In October of the same year the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the CPSU pledged, in a joint statement, to speed up the development of light industry.<sup>27</sup>

One would expect the 'rationalists', who do not hesitate to promote self-interest and financial incentives, to attach greater importance to consumer goods. Obviously, the call for a rational economy and performance-related wages does not necessarily lead to the advocacy of a consumer society governed by a purely materialistic ethos. It is odd, however, that those authors preoccupied with the 'petty bourgeois materialism' of their compatriots should make so little allowance for their harsh conditions of living. They fail, in

particular, to establish a link between obsessive materialism and shortage of goods. L. Kuznetsova is one of the very few authors who relate the phenomenon of 'veshchizm' to the shortages (defitsit), arguing that frustration breeds obsession.<sup>28</sup> As a result, little attempt is made to distinguish between the sordid materialism of Soviet society riddled by corruption and a more constructive use of material affluence as promoted by Zhilina.

Might it be the case that these authors have inherited the taste of a section of the Russian intelligentsia for a brand of Tolstoian ascetism? Or is it the contempt for material wealth which figures prominently in the socialist tradition of the nineteenth century? It is interesting to note that in The Origin of Russian Communism, N. Berdyaev points to a strong ascetic leaning both in writers whose work is 'coloured by religion', such as Gogol, Tolstoi and Dostoevsky, and in materialist thinkers such as Belinsky, Bakunin and Chernyshevsky, these very different authors sharing a common aversion to capitalism and the bourgeoisie.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, Zhilina and Borisova's more positive appreciation of material affluence - women tend to be quick at understanding the merits of washing machines - is echoed by the great number of articles on 'byt', which will be examined in the following two chapters.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. V. Eliseeva, 'Istorii neskhozhie, no...', LG, 1968, No.21, p.12.
3. B. Rymar', 'Padenie', LG, 1971, No.39, p.12.
4. A. Sukontsev, 'A byl li barashek?', LG, 1968, No.37, p.12.
5. Eliseeva, loc. cit.
6. Rymar' and Sukontsev, loc. cit.
7. Evg. Bogat, 'O chudakakh i ratsionalistakh', LG, 1967, No.14, p.13.
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9. About the wage reforms which reduced wage differentials after 1953, see, in particular, M. McAuley, Politics and the Soviet Union, Penguin Books, 1984, p.247; Uravnilovka (wage-levelling) is frequently criticized in LG in articles deploring the low status of engineers. It is commonly argued that only performance-related wage policies and wider wage differentials between technicians and engineers will succeed in enhancing the prestige of the profession; see, for example, 'Diplom i dolzhnost'', Discussion Club, 1969, No.34, p.10, and Yan Kotkovskii, 'Inzhenernyi trud: spory i sravneniya', 1969, No.37, p.10.
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16. 'Bedneyut li nashi chuvstva?', LG, 1971, No.31, p.11.
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18. 'Prorab i golub', LG, 1971, No.38, p.11.
19. V. Aksenov, 'Bedneyut li nashi chuvstva?', LG, 1971, No.31, p.11.
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22. I. Klyamkin, 'Obyazatel'no li khodit' v gosti?', LG, 1968, No.26, p.10.

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24. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Vospitanie chuvstv', LG, 1970, No.12, p.11; for Zhukhovitskii and Orlov's articles on leisure activities see Chapter 5, section 1.

25. L. Zhilina, 'Zachem nuzhen transistor?', LG, 1969, No.34, p.12.

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27. E. R. Frankel, Novyi Mir - A Case Study in the Politics of Literature - 1952-58, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp.20-49.

28. L. Kuznetsova, 'Mini, midi, maksi...', LG, 1971, No.5, p.12.

29. N. Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1937, p.50, pp.70-3, p.88 and p.145; in fact many nihilists of the 1860s were trained as seminarists, for example, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov; see also R. Belknap, 'On Quantifying Quality' in H. Herlemann, ed., Quality of Life in the Soviet Union, Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987, pp.7-12: Belknap defines three ideological trends that might account for this reluctance to promote utilitarian concerns: 1) 'pastoral minimalism' dating back from the Slavophiles and perpetuated by Tolstoi, Solzhenitsyn and the Soviet village writers; 2) 'perversity', i.e. 'less is better', a theory to be found in Dostoevsky; 3) 'delayed gratification' in the form of religious, but also secular asceticism. Ascetics sacrifice the quality of their lives for the sake of a glowing future they will not see. This current can be observed in many Russian literary works (see, for instance, Chernyshevsky) and in Soviet official ideology.



## VII. FRUSTRATION WITH STATE-RUN SERVICES

It is unlikely that the disinclination of a section of the Soviet intelligentsia to acknowledge the importance of consumer goods can alone account for the fact that the great number of articles on conditions of living focus overwhelmingly on the inadequacies of public services. It seems that, in this matter, Literaturnaya gazeta shied away from challenging the political leadership whose pledge to increase investments significantly in light industry has never been honoured. The few contributors who discuss the negative effects of the shortages refrain from openly relating the problem to the lack of commitment on the part of the authorities to reconsider their economic priorities.

It is ironic that the first issue of the new format should have advertised the construction in Zaporozh'e of a dom byta, a complex the conception of which is reminiscent of Western shopping centres. The photo, showing a tower surrounded by other modern buildings, is accompanied by a short article which describes the range of amenities - shops, cafes, services - and proudly announces the opening of the complex for the fiftieth anniversary of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup> In fact, with very few exceptions, the articles on conditions of living are extremely critical of the existing facilities and structures. The litany of outspoken grievances mostly concerns the following services: the postal and telephone services, libraries and bookshops, repair shops, transport

and roads, the health service and housing - approximately a quarter of the material deals with housing.

Many contributors openly make out a case for a more consumer-oriented society. They put forward specific suggestions frequently inspired by the Western experience. However, first of all, we shall examine articles by authors who are chiefly interested in denouncing the managerial incompetence of large organizations and ministries in charge of providing services and their contempt for the general public.

#### 1. Rubinov's Crusades against Managerial Incompetence

Contributions on inadequately run services vary in form and content. There is a number of usually short articles from readers or local reporters who express their dissatisfaction with specific services. During the years 1967-71 the favourite targets of this kind of criticism seem to have been libraries and bookshops, chemist shops, as well as a number of mail services. Particular grievances can occasionally prompt broader criticisms. For example, at one point, the frequent complaints about the dearth of good reading matter in both bookshops and libraries, which is partly accounted for by a shortage of paper, were followed up by a longer article which blames the large administrations for wasting paper out of sheer inertia by printing enormous quantities of obsolete or useless forms, leaflets and posters.<sup>2</sup>

The most provocative contributions, however, come from the journalists of Literaturnaya gazeta, whose criticisms are levelled at the whole bureaucratic machinery. They unabashedly take stock of the blatant and numerous shortcomings of public services and make no secret of their complete lack of faith in the managerial competence of the ministries and the large organizations under their jurisdiction. The uncompromising tone of Zhukhovitskii's article on train services and railway stations is typical of the attitude of the whole newspaper. After denouncing the inability or unwillingness of station staff to help sort out problems with tickets (he, himself, had to wave his journalist card at them in order to obtain the ticket he needed), Zhukhovitskii then turns his attention to the services available in the station. This is the conclusion he draws:

... it is shameful that a great number of our railway stations should remind us of coaching inns at the time of early Feudalism. And no sign of the Renaissance yet!<sup>3</sup>

That it was the editorial policy of the paper to orchestrate a systematic campaign against bureaucratic incompetence is corroborated by the series of 'experiments' carried out by Rubinov and his colleagues. Rubinov and his team set out to expose the inadequacies of essential public services, namely the mail and telephone services, the various means of public transport (i.e. buses, trams, trolleybuses as well as the rail and air ways), repairs of consumer goods and

home deliveries. The articles were based on so-called 'experiments' as reporters checked the different services for themselves. Most of the time Rubinov himself would then publish extremely detailed accounts of their experiences, which invariably prompted him to level damning criticism at the officials in charge.

The informative value of such an exercise seems rather dubious, and not only because criticism of public services was nothing particularly new in the Soviet press. The point is that this is a type of investigative journalism that all Soviet citizens unwittingly practise every day of their lives. Who needed reminding of the difficulties in obtaining plane or train tickets or of the excruciatingly slow pace of all administrative transactions as employees have to fill numerous forms by hand? (The need to computerize the services is frequently pointed out.) Every Soviet citizen had had to put up with uncooperative and ill-informed staff, incapable of telling them whether their flight has been cancelled or not. Every Soviet citizen had had to argue with repair men who damage rather than repair, or perform unnecessary and expensive repairs in order to fulfil their plans.

Soviet readers probably enjoyed finding in these accounts an expression of their own daily frustrations. Rubinov and his colleagues seem to take a malicious pleasure in emphasizing the infuriating absurdities of many aspects of Soviet everyday life. It is clear, however, that the real interest of the series lies not so much in the information it

provides as in the paper's emphatic condemnation of managerial incompetence.

Yet again the procedure adopted by Rubinov is a well established one in Soviet journalism. Misgivings about the supposedly democratic and reforming function of the practice have already been voiced in this study with regards to the debate on invalids. Rubinov and his reporters do not break any fresh ground by taking officials to task. According to Soviet law ministries and other institutions are required to reply to criticisms addressed to them through the medium of the press within a month. What, then, makes Rubinov's series of 'experiments' so different? Why did it become, as Dzirkals and her colleagues pointed out in their case study, 'one of the second section's most popular specialities'?<sup>4</sup>

The authors of the above-mentioned short study of Literaturnaya gazeta suggest that criticism of inadequate public services was 'unusually persistent and broad' in Rubinov's series. It is, indeed, the case that reporters do not focus on one particular fault. Their criticism encompasses the whole service under scrutiny. And they certainly are persistent as they carry out a second experiment later on in order to check whether the promises made by the officials have been fulfilled. This unusual practice is indicative of Rubinov's blatantly irreverent attitude towards bureaucracies. It is worth examining one of the 'experiments' in more detail in order to appreciate the tone of his attacks.

Operation 'Labelled Atoms', aimed at exposing the inefficiency of the postal service, was launched in February 1970 with a second 'experiment' carried out exactly a year later.<sup>5</sup> The operation was not, however, Rubinov's first attack on this public service. He had already pointed out in an article published in 1967 that thousands of letters get thrown away every year as hotels and the poste restante often do not take the trouble to return the uncollected mail. He had also complained about the unacceptable slowness of the delivery system. 'Why does it take a letter three days to travel from Moscow to Leningrad when the train journey lasts only six hours?

Rubinov is anxious to emphasize that the predominantly female post office staff, who have to work in unenviable conditions (bad roads, inadequate transport facilities, low pay) must not be held responsible for the poor performance of the service. Management are at fault as they have failed to bring about the long overdue changes that would have transformed a particularly 'primitive' service into one belonging to the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

The 'experiment' which Rubinov and his reporters carried out three years later led them to the same conclusions. Letters were sent to local correspondents of Literaturnaya gazeta in various cities of the country at exactly the same time. Not all of them arrived swiftly and some never reached their destinations at all. Rubinov describes the operation in great detail - his account occupies a whole page of the

paper, which is indicative of the great support enjoyed by Rubinov's initiative amongst the board of editors. His main conclusion, that the speed of delivery has little to do with the distance covered and that it is both slow and unreliable, could hardly be news to anyone. But the great number of details supporting his claim, as well as accounts of similarly incriminating letters from readers published a few weeks later, were likely to create maximum embarrassment for management and the ministry of communications. (A reader gives the comical example of a letter which travelled 61 days from one area of Kiev to another.) The sheer quantity and precision of the information made it all the more difficult to dismiss the issue as a minor problem.<sup>7</sup>

The originality of Rubinov's style lies also in his uninhibited desire to engage in controversies with the officials under attack. In several of his articles on the postal service Rubinov introduces criteria of comparison which were bound to be resented by the ministry of communications. Indeed, he argues that the Soviet mail service compares badly with those of pre-Revolutionary Russia and contemporary Western Europe, where it is being modernized. The minister could hardly ignore such a provocative statement, which was both humiliating and ideologically unsound. The tsarist postal service, the minister bravely replies, existed for the convenience of a small privileged class. As to Western countries, they do not face the same difficulties given the small size of their

territories. Not impressed by the minister's counter-attack, Rubinov stands his ground. True, nowadays the post-office has to meet the needs of a large public. Yet has the minister not overlooked a few important factors, such as industrialization, the scientific and technical revolution or the existence of modern means of transport? As for the comparison with the Western nations, Literaturnaya gazeta did take into account their small size when comparing their achievements with those of the USSR.<sup>8</sup>

It is a measure of Rubinov's unsettling influence that the minister, N. D. Psurtsev, should have felt that it was appropriate for him to reply himself rather than pass on the task to his deputy, which is common practice. However, Psurtsev's personal intervention has not stopped Rubinov from exposing the limitations of the measures taken by the ministry. He greets, though without undue enthusiasm, Psurtsev's belated decision to introduce post codes, an automated sorting system, night shifts and special letter boxes for local mail in order to help speed up delivery. At the same time he is quick to point out that the minister has conveniently avoided addressing fundamental issues, such as the need to improve transport facilities and premises as well as to reduce the high turn over of staff by significantly increasing wages.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps more important of all is Rubinov's blatant lack of respect for officials. He does not trust them and frequently implies that they make a habit of lying to the



public. After all, he reminds them with calculated indelicacy, it is not the first time Literaturnaya gazeta has drawn the unsatisfactory performance of the post office to the ministry's attention. Take, for instance, his own article published in 1967 where he was already arguing for the introduction of an automated sorting out system as in West Germany. Nothing came of it.<sup>10</sup> Rubinov's unambiguous message to officials is that they are not trustworthy because they have repeatedly failed to keep their promises. He makes no apology for the angry tone which permeates most of his articles. Soviet citizens, he seems to imply, are entitled to show signs of impatience as these desperately needed reforms should have been implemented years ago.

Rubinov seems to take great relish in challenging high-ranking officials, and sarcasm is one of his favourite weapons. Remarking that the Literaturnaya gazeta has not yet received a reply from the ministry a month after the incriminating article was published, he wickedly suggests that the letter has probably been posted, but we all know about the unreliability of the mail service!<sup>11</sup> Warning the minister that a second 'experiment' will be carried out in a year's time, he argues no less sarcastically that this will give the paper and its readership:

... the opportunity to compare the work of the post office not with the distant past or the foreign experience, but with the situation as it was in the country a year ago.<sup>12</sup>

By hammering the performance of ministries and officials, Rubinov achieves two complementary goals. Firstly, he clearly establishes with whom the responsibility lies and questions the bureaucratic structures which produce so much incompetence. Secondly, he helps destroy the myth of the supposedly corrective function of the press. The report on the second 'experiment', which again occupies a whole page of the paper, is overwhelmingly negative. Both the reporters' second investigation and readers' accounts have shown that little improvement has been taking place, except perhaps in Leningrad and Tbilisi. Rubinov welcomes the introduction of special letter boxes for local mail, yet, never missing an opportunity to doubt officials' honesty and commitment, he publishes the letter of a reader who claims to have seen a post office employee diligently throwing letters from local and intercity mail boxes into the same bag!<sup>13</sup>

Rubinov's series succeeds in upsetting the cosy relationship which tends to exist between the media and officialdom. It demonstrates that the practice of public criticism is often nothing more than a perfunctory and cynical exercise in public relations which rarely produces any practical results. And Rubinov tells officials that he is aware of it and that he is not prepared to play the game:

We do not want to receive yet another communication from the ministry which focuses mainly on successes already achieved, leaving virtually no space for a discussion of what matters.<sup>14</sup>

On the surface Rubinov seems to be using the same old method. Yet he drastically changes its nature by the way he relates to officialdom. The press and officials no longer belong to the same side. Officials are no longer loyal partners in the process of constructive criticism aimed at improving a supposedly basically sound system. Rubinov's series of articles, a fictional title of which could be 'J'accuse', breaks up the complicity by forcefully suggesting that officials will not help solve the problem because they are part of it.

## 2. Bureaucratic Contempt for the Public

Large organizations are harshly criticized not only for their lack of managerial competence but also for their failure to comprehend their specific mission as providers of services. Indeed, the way they carry out their business reveals utter contempt for the general public. They do not deem it necessary, for instance, to publicize their activities, so that the population is only vaguely aware of the services available. No warning is given when changes are introduced, no apologies are made when things go wrong.

Rubinov, like many other contributors, touches upon the issue, in an article in which he relates a whole series of cases where various organizations neglected to keep the public informed, thus putting great numbers of people to considerable inconvenience. A train broke down, leaving its passengers stranded in the middle of nowhere without a single

word of explanation or reassurance for nearly two hours. Housing authorities have not informed tenants of the date when their dilapidated house will be repaired. Rumours have spread and no one dares to go for a holiday for fear of being evacuated during their absence. Public transport management did not bother to announce a temporary, yet drastic, reduction in the bus service, caused by the need to transport children to summer camps, with the result that regular users have arrived late at work. Rubinov speaks of 'departmental (vedomstvennyi) "secret"' mania amongst institutions and speculates how much more comfortable Soviet people's lives would be if they were kept adequately informed by the organizations whose services they have to resort to. They could finally be in control of their lives.<sup>15</sup> Rubinov's grievance echoes Shlyapentokh's argument that freedom of choice goes hand in hand with full access to information.<sup>16</sup>

Administrative bodies show no more interest in finding out what people need or want than in publicizing their activities. An excellent example of this total lack of communication and the conflicts it can cause is given by N. Il'ina, a writer who has frequently proved to be a very reliable critic of Soviet social reality. The incident upon which she comments concerns housing, an area which, as will be shown later on in this study, has been extensively used by Literaturnaya gazeta to demonstrate the evils of bureaucratic management.

As an increasing number of Muscovites, Il'ina relates, grow flowers around their blocks of flats and put up fences to protect them against inconsiderate fellow citizens, the city council decided to replace the makeshift fences with proper ones. Il'ina fully approves of this decision, yet is indignant at the way it was carried out in the Pervomaiskii raion (district). Tenants in this area were not informed of the council's decision and, therefore, were understandably outraged when they saw their fences being pulled down and burnt right in front of their blocks. Furthermore, the promised new fences never materialized. When the official responsible for such an ill-considered and insensitive measure came to talk to the tenants whose angry letters had been passed on to him by Literaturnaya gazeta, he addressed them as if they were 'criminals', guilty of 'individualism' (Why were they so determined to 'fence themselves off'?), which leads Il'ina to conclude that some people are 'incapable of explaining, advising or persuading. They are only capable of taking and giving orders'.<sup>17</sup>

It is interesting to see how the official uses the collectivist ethos to discredit the tenants' initiative. Obviously it did not cross his mind that the rebellious tenants could be considered as a collective whose claims deserve serious consideration. This is yet again a clear case of 'collectivism from above'.

Ironically, officials involved in the organization of public services tend to consider the voice of the public as

an interference in their affairs. Rubinov, who is never afraid of switching from the particular to the general, very appropriately remarks:

All of us - not only passengers but also clients, customers, tenants - are at times treated as if we were a not particularly pleasant, or even importunate addition to the important business which people occupying ... [highly] responsible posts are entrusted with...<sup>18</sup>

Many other contributions confirm that such a cavalier attitude towards the public is widespread and can be observed amongst well-meaning, as well as unscrupulous, officials. The bureaucratic approach to running the services means that the allegiance of officials is principally to their organizations. Therefore, the most dedicated of them are likely to make decisions dictated by a kind of administrative logic which might be in complete contradiction with the needs of the population. Take, for instance, the USSR Deputy Minister of Health, A. Burnazyan, who, in his reply to a disgruntled reader, publicly and ingenuously argues that it does not make sense to sell medicines in small demand in every chemist shop. Burnazyan's bureaucratic rationalization prevents him from even considering the inconvenience such an arrangement creates for a patient in regular need of such a drug who happens to live far away from the only shop where it is available.<sup>19</sup>

Any attempt to put the public first would be thwarted by the administrative mechanisms which regulate the organization

of the services. Several contributions highlight the fact that state planning, frequently subjected to criticism in the economics section of the paper, can have particularly ludicrous results when applied to the service sector. Why, for instance, is it so difficult to borrow literary works from libraries? The problem is, B. Finnasov irritably reports, libraries are obliged to lend a certain percentage of, say, technical, scientific or atheist literature. And as many more readers are interested in fiction and poetry, libraries have had to set a limit to the number of literary works which can be taken out, in order to maintain the required quotas. As a result, a great number of existing copies of novels and poetry books are not made available to the public. The state's erroneous belief that it can shape people's reading habits leads to rather comical situations. Finnasov quotes the case of a library where it has become practically impossible to borrow And Quiet Flows the Don unless members are willing to read Sholokhov in the German or English language.<sup>20</sup> The inadequacies of the library loan system are the more frustrating because of the paucity of books in shops, another cause for complaint in numerous contributions.

It is occasionally pointed out that the wage system, which is closely linked with the requirements of the plan, also contributes to producing the most irrational results. Il'ina wrote an article on the subject which might be described as extremely funny were it not for the predicament

of the victims. Her target is the construction board in charge of restoring decrepit buildings. Here are the two outrageous cases on which she bases her criticism.

A group of tenants has applied for major repairs for three years without success. To their great surprise, however, it was arranged for them to have their sanitary equipment replaced. It did not worry any of the builders or officials that one of the lavatory pans fell through the unrepaired floor.

Central heating has been installed in a block of flats that has been declared beyond repair by the housing authorities and is, therefore, awaiting demolition. To cap it all, the tenants are not even able to enjoy so unexpected a luxury as the radiators have been left in the courtyard and the fitters have shown no sign of wanting to come back to finish the job.<sup>21</sup>

Negligence and unscrupulousness are encouraged by an absurd system of wages. Salaries and bonuses vary depending on how well the plan has been fulfilled. The degree of success in fulfilling the plan depends on the amount of money spent on the repairs, which includes the cost of the material used. The more material has been used, the more money has been spent and the higher the wages are. Consequently, more money can be made from replacing bathroom installations than from repairing walls and ceilings. And what is the point of putting in the radiators when it is sufficient to sell them



to the housing authorities and bring them in in order to secure wages?<sup>22</sup>

Finally, it is pointed out that public services greatly suffer from the atomization of responsibilities. On the occasion of the opening session of the V All-Union Congress of architects, Literaturnaya gazeta provocatively published an article by L. Zhukhovitskii containing a damning criticism of the poor quality of housing, as well as the corruption of the repair services. First of all, Zhukhovitskii lists a whole series of shortcomings commonly observed in new flats (paper-thin walls, bad plumbing etc...). He also underlines the absurdity of standardization taken to its extreme, remarking that usually the first thing the new tenants have to do is to change the locks as all the flats in the block, sometimes in the whole estate, have been equipped with identical ones. He then argues that many problems arise from the fact that different organizations are in charge of the various stages in the construction and decoration of the flats. There is little coordination between them and little concern about the quality of the end product, i.e. little concern about the future occupiers.<sup>23</sup>

It would be pointless to list all the articles denouncing the lack of consideration shown by state-run organizations for the public they are supposed to serve. The above-mentioned articles have been selected because they contain most of the recurrent arguments and their authors have expounded them in a particularly forceful manner. It

seems, however, appropriate to finish off with A. Markusha's unusual and virulent attack on the cynicism and corruption of the funeral services in Moscow.<sup>24</sup>

Markusha relates the case of an elderly woman who was unceremoniously instructed by the authorities to have her family grave moved somewhere else in order to make room for a public convenience. As a rule, he continues, the staff are rude and corrupt. You have to dip in your pocket all the time if only to make sure that you will obtain a space or that the grave will be dug. Markusha calls upon the authorities to do away with complacency towards vandalism in cemeteries and the ubiquitous corruption in both cemeteries and funeral parlours.

Markusha's contribution is important in its own right. As he himself points out, he is touching upon a taboo subject. In the framework of the more general discussion on public services his article does not really add anything new to the substance of the debate, except, perhaps, that he places a greater emphasis on corruption than other authors. But Markusha's article vividly evokes the humiliation suffered by Soviet people even at the most distressing moments of their lives and their depressing helplessness in the face of state organizations which have no understanding of the very concept of public service.

### 3. Bureaucratic Management and Lack of Professionalism:

#### The Case of Housing

Articles on housing, town-planning, communications and transport account for more than half of all the material dealing with living conditions (approximately 160,000 words). A variety of issues are discussed. There is, for instance, the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of small and medium-size towns compared with those of large cities. The economist Perevedentsev, a frequent participant in the debate and a fierce advocate of urban growth, argues that large cities are better for the welfare of their inhabitants as well as for the economy of the country at large (well developed infrastructure, highly qualified and, therefore, better paid labour force, wider range of services etc...<sup>25</sup>).

Also worth mentioning is the fairly substantial debate on the insufficient network of roads. The blame is usually placed on the central planning authorities, which are criticized for considerably reducing budget allocations for the construction of roads and for relying on the generosity or resourcefulness of collective farms and enterprises far too much. The problem is reported to be particularly acute in the countryside, where many villages cannot successfully develop their economy as a result of their physical isolation from neighbouring villages or larger urban centres.<sup>26</sup> The need to motorize Soviet society is also discussed. There is a general feeling in favour of mass production of private cars even though reservations are occasionally voiced as to the

possibly negative effects of such a development on the quality of urban life.<sup>27</sup>

The debate on housing (approximately 70,000 words) does not so much highlight controversies over economic policies and priorities as expose the workings of bureaucratic management. Harsh criticisms are levelled at the extreme centralization of the system and the bureaucratization of the professions, in this case, architecture. The debate is, however, limited insofar as it focuses on the poor quality of new blocks of flats. There is the odd angry article denouncing the shortages. I. Pachogin and V. Pussov, for instance, indignantly remind those at the top that more than half of the population of Leningrad is still living in communal flats, often without central heating or bathtubs. They call for urgent measures aimed at speeding up the modernization of the old districts.<sup>28</sup> But, on the whole, the problem of the shortages is taken for granted rather than discussed. As in the case of consumer goods, there is no attempt to question the government's overall housing policy, which, it could be argued, is itself instrumental in producing the shortages.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of debate on the very issue of shortages can be interpreted as a tacit recognition of the fact that the present government should not be held entirely responsible for them. The Khrushchev and Brezhnev administrations inherited the situation from Stalin, who invested predominantly in heavy industry and spent vast amounts of

money on ostentatious building projects while most people lived in cramped and squalid accommodation. However intensive they were, the housing programmes implemented by his successors failed to keep up with increasing population numbers and people's rising expectations.<sup>30</sup>

It is nevertheless true that a historical perspective does not necessarily rule out a discussion of, say, the allocation system and the corruption it often produces, the illegal housing market, the principle of heavily subsidized rents or even the very notion of state monopoly. None of these fundamental issues are tackled. On the other hand the paper does not publicize enthusiastic reports on the number of housing units built every year. The overall picture is rather negative. While the idea of state monopoly is nowhere questioned, the manner in which state organizations manage the housing sector and town-planning is harshly criticized.

A few articles, though not very many, expose the extreme centralization of the system. Decisions are taken in Moscow or Leningrad by teams of architects, unaware of local needs, which can have disastrous consequences on the welfare of the local population. For example, Literaturnaya gazeta's special correspondent in Novosibirsk reports that housing in Siberia is not adapted to the harsh climate of the region.<sup>31</sup> The problem can be an aesthetic one. Vl. Ishimov, the paper's special correspondent in Bukhara, reports that the local team of architects was not allowed to modify the plans for the new

town of Navoi, sent from Leningrad, which take no account of the cultural and architectural characteristics of the area.<sup>32</sup>

The question is most openly tackled in the second issue of the new format. A school teacher from a small town in the Urals wrote to complain that her town is developing in the most irrational fashion. The latest plans, which, again, have been drawn up in Leningrad, foresee the construction of a hostel for the town's garment factory workers miles away from their place of work, as well as a second cinema, even though the existing one is rarely full and there is a shortage of schools. The reader questions the way these decisions are made:

We are indignant, but there's nothing we can do. We are not asked for our opinion. But what surprises me even more is that we're told that the construction plans have been drawn up in Leningrad.<sup>33</sup>

The author of the short article following the reader's letter develops her argument further, relating the issue to the broader question of grass root democracy. Isn't it the case, he argues, that the Party programme emphasizes the 'need to improve and develop socialist democracy', that Lenin believed that the masses must be involved in the running of society? He then calls for a greater degree of independence from the centre and the democratization of local organs of power:

Why can't the regional, town, district and village soviets submit their plans for the following year to the electors for discussion?<sup>34</sup>

As usual, however, this outspoken appeal for the democratization of political life is not taken any further. Most of the material on housing concentrates on the inability or unwillingness of the authorities to include experts in the decision-making process, hence their lack of professionalism in running this vast public service.

It is clear that dissatisfaction with housing stems primarily from the shortages. Yet, as Literaturnaya gazeta failed to generate a debate on the possible ways of reducing them drastically, the discussion focuses on the authorities' inadequate management of the service. For example, a short debate took place in 1968 on whether the criterion for the allocation of housing should be the number of square metres or the quantity of rooms. A. Ladinskii, a construction engineer working for the Siberian section of the USSR Academy of Sciences, thinks that people usually prefer having several small rooms rather than one or two large ones.<sup>35</sup> B. Svetlichnyi, an architect, disagrees, arguing that these rooms would be ridiculously tiny and uncomfortable as the surface area permitted for each individual is unlikely to increase in the near future. Criticizing the low quality of the new buildings, partly caused by the high pace of construction imposed by official quotas, Svetlichnyi surmises that the majority of his compatriots would be prepared to wait even a little longer if they could be certain to get a better quality flat. Finally he closes the debate, suggesting that architects and construction organizations should strive

to find out the future occupiers' preferences, and calling upon sociologists to provide them with the information.<sup>36</sup>

It is perfectly obvious why organizations in charge of construction and housing should be reluctant to consult sociologists. A survey carried out in Akademgorodok on the question of 'more rooms' versus 'bigger ones' has shown that, ideally, people would like more rooms in bigger flats!<sup>37</sup> But even though construction organizations are not expected to solve the housing shortage overnight, they are not deemed justified in ignoring the latest social trends which determine the nature of the population's needs. A few months before the above-mentioned debate, Zhukhovitskii was already remarking that in Moscow architects keep on building three-room flats designed for families of five - usually a young couple with child sharing with the parents of one of them - while it has become a well-known fact that the older and younger generations would rather live separately. Like many other contributors, Zhukhovitskii holds the view that builders, architects and planning organizations should work together with sociologists and economists.<sup>38</sup>

It is commonly argued that sociologists should be encouraged to give architects and planning committees the information they need to diversify housing provisions depending on the sizes of the families and people's personal tastes. The question of accommodation for single tenants should also be adequately addressed. The Soviet population



can no longer be satisfied by 'more'. It also has to be 'better'.

A. Baranov describes sociologists as intermediaries between architects and the population.<sup>39</sup> In a society where individuals cannot order their own blueprints or choose from a wide range of already completed buildings, sociologists have been commissioned, so to speak, to articulate people's needs and aspirations and champion their cause against the power of bureaucracy.

In the above-mentioned debate architects are frequently presented as the accomplices of officialdom and bureaucracy. On the other hand, Literaturnaya gazeta gave architects a fair amount of space to voice their own dissatisfaction with the narrow constraints within which they have to work. Interestingly enough, architects occasionally came into conflict with sociologists, as was the case in the discussion of the new type of housing project, known as the DNB (Dom novogo byta) project, a complex combining housing units with collectivized amenities, run by professionals. Dining rooms on each floor in each block of flats were to solve the food problem for the residents.<sup>40</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta, although quite clearly in favour of this new housing project, published an article by two sociologists, Ya. Zhuchok and E. Zuikova, revealingly entitled 'Housing with privileges?'.<sup>41</sup> While approving of the architects' attempt to reduce time spent on domestic chores, they deem the idea unrealistic as the socialization of

housework has remained costly. Food made available in the DNB dining-rooms would cost 16 per cent more than food prepared at home, with the result that only high-income households could afford to live there. The fact that the collective facilities would not be open to the general public and that the construction costs are above average add, in their view, to the socially unfair nature of the project. To this, N. Osterman, the architect in charge of the new project, replies that an element of inequality is inevitable in the process of solving the housing crisis, and reminds his opponents that the same criticism was levelled at him and his team when they built the Cheremushki estates, as it meant that some Muscovites would be provided with separate flats while others would still be living in communal accommodation.<sup>42</sup>

This difference of opinion between architects and sociologists highlights the financial and ideological constraints within which Soviet architects have to work. It should not be regarded, however, as a sign of deep and constant antagonism between the two professions. It is clear that architects believe in the value of debate and cooperation with social scientists. What concerns them, rather, is the ossification of their profession.

Half a dozen contributions from architects focus on this issue, the most comprehensive one being that of Feliks Novikov introduced by Literaturnaya gazeta as a 'famous architect'.<sup>43</sup> Novikov claims that the recent decree jointly issued by the CC of the CPSU and the Soviet government

'concerning measures aimed at improving the quality of housing construction' has been welcomed by many architects in the land. Indeed, widespread dissatisfaction can be observed in the profession, which badly needs to be revitalized along these lines:

This task entails the individualization of the architectural creation. In my view, this is not in contradiction with the industrial method of construction, provided that industry is seen as a means to realize the architect's idea. The architect must not be the slave of the construction industry, but its master.<sup>44</sup>

Architects should not feel straitjacketed, Novikov continues, either by building organizations or clients, whether they are enterprises, collective farms or the local authorities. They should not have to agree to include in their project the use of some material just because the enterprise manager happens to have laid his hand on it.<sup>45</sup> They should not have to cooperate with local bureaucracies or construction organizations which show no concern for the preservation of old monuments.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, most contributors, including Novikov, believe that there is a need to democratize the profession in order to unleash the creativity of its members. It is important to note that the ossification of intellectual thought was perceived as a crucial issue by all professionals. It is a concern frequently voiced in another debate publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta which tackles the broader issue of academic and scientific research. It is

repeatedly argued that not only is the work of researchers constantly slowed down by red-tape, irregular supplies and inadequate equipment, it is further hamstrung by the prevalence of seniority over performance, the general climate of intellectual intolerance and the lack of communication between researchers as well as between institutes.<sup>47</sup>

The powerlessness of individual architects silenced by the hierarchical structure of their institutions is deplored by several contributors to the debate on architecture. N. Sokolov, a rank and file architect it would seem, argues that the lack of debate between colleagues dates back from the period of industrialization, when the profession underwent a process of extreme centralization. Since then only institutions have had the right to publicize their criticisms, while architects without management responsibilities have not even been allowed to discuss their own work in the press. The much criticized uniformity of housing blocks, he concludes, results as much from the inflexibility of the architecture establishment as from economic restraints.<sup>48</sup>

A. Izoitko, an architect from Leningrad, compares the city planning organization (GlavAPU) with a tribunal:

There is practically no discussion, no attempt to understand the author's idea. The court is always categorical and right... It is often the case that architects are not even given a single opportunity to defend or explain their project.<sup>49</sup>

Novikov is aware that the process of renewing the profession will take time. Many architects whose creative work is hampered, among other things, by administrative tasks have lost their confidence. The short debate publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta shows, however, that there is an increasing number of frustrated and angry architects waiting for the opportunity to use their talents to the full.<sup>50</sup>

The debates on housing contain an explicit condemnation of the bureaucratic and overcentralized type of management, which inevitably results in a deplorable waste of skills and talents. The implicit conclusion seems to be that unless drastic changes take place in the management of public services, their quality is unlikely to improve.

#### 4. Conclusion

Several fundamental issues are overlooked in the debates on state-run services. There is no attempt, for example, to question the leadership's economic priorities and investment policies in the areas of light industry, the housing sector and other public services.<sup>51</sup> The relatively low degree of attention given to the corruption caused by the present system is equally disappointing. Finally, the basic principles regulating the organization of the services, such as, in the case of housing, state monopoly and the system of heavily subsidized rents, are never discussed.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the administrative method of management is systematically discredited. While some

difference of opinions could be detected in the debate on materialism, the bureaucratic approach to the management of the services is unanimously condemned. No effort is made to provide readers with a reasonably balanced account of the activities of the large organizations (ministries and various other institutions). The backwardness and inefficiency of the services are documented with ruthless determination. The bureaucracies, allegedly concerned primarily with 'institutional (vedomstvennye) interests' are openly held responsible for the incredible waste of human resources and talents. They prevent the professions from working efficiently and, therefore, from serving the public well. The bureaucratization of the professions has led to their ossification and a widespread lack of professionalism.

The incompatibility between bureaucracy and science, a theme which was bound to figure prominently in the list of concerns shared by the readers of Literaturnaya gazeta, was already very popular in the literature of the Thaw.<sup>53</sup> The question also frequently recurs in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta at the end of the sixties, in particular in the large section devoted to economic issues where it is commonly argued that engineers need better financial incentives and more professional freedom.

The debate does not seem to have been taken much further by Literaturnaya gazeta, as comprehensive alternatives to the administrative type of management are never discussed.<sup>54</sup> Yet it is important that the paper of the technical and

scientific intelligentsia should have carried on campaigning against bureaucratic power. Ministries and planning organizations are harshly criticized whenever the opportunity arises, particularly in the economic section in which they are frequently blamed for the unsatisfactory results (a euphemism for failure) of the economic reform. It is an idea which has obviously gained ground all through the seventies. Gorbachev's decision to shut down entire ministries was certainly in tune with it.

This consensus of opinions against officialdom and bureaucracies is reminiscent of the debates questioning the validity of the theory of collectivism. In fact, there is a close connection between the two debates. It is revealing, for instance, that Il'ina's authoritarian official should have called upon the collectivist ethos to discredit the tenants' initiative, which he deems individualistic. In the debates on public services, the oppressive collectives are the large organizations whose policies show little concern for the public's diverse needs and aspirations. Their bureaucratic nature greatly undermines their ability to understand their mission as providers of services.

The Scandinavian sociologist S. Johansson defines welfare as being 'the individual's command over resources such as money, possessions, knowledge, mental and physical energy, social relations, security etc..., with which the individual can control and consciously direct his living conditions'.<sup>55</sup> This definition provides a useful explanatory

key to understanding the predicament of Soviet consumers and users of services. Not only are they increasingly as much concerned with quality as with quantity, they also aspire to be in a position where they can control their lives rather than be at the mercy of anonymous and all-powerful bureaucracies. The articles which will be examined in the next chapter articulate certain consumers' demands which point precisely in this direction.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See LG, 1967, No.1, p.10.
2. R. Iyul'skii and M. Smirnov, 'Vnimanie - bumaga', LG, 1970, No.7, p.12.
3. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Vozlyubi passazhira!', LG, 1969, No.33, p.11.
4. L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR, Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1982, p.120.
5. A. Rubinov, 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.6, p.12 and 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy - 2"', LG, 1971, No.6, p.12.
6. A. Rubinov, 'Pis'ma edut s bubentsami', LG, 1967, No.23, p.10.
7. Rubinov, 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.6, p.12; and 'Dolgimi pochtovymi putyami', LG, 1970, No.12, pp.12-13.
8. 'Posle vystuplenii L.G. - Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.15, pp.12-13.
9. Ibid.
10. Rubinov, 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.6, p.12.
11. 'Dolgimi pochtovymi putyami', LG, 1970, No.12, pp.12-13.
12. 'Posle vystuplenii L.G. - Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.15, pp.12-13.
13. Rubinov, 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy - 2"', LG, 1971, No.6, p.12.
14. Rubinov, 'Operatsiya "mechenye atomy"', LG, 1970, No.6, p.12.
15. Rubinov, 'Eta malen'kaya avariya...', LG, 1970, No.28, p.11.
16. See Chapter V, section 3.
17. N. Il'ina, 'Reshenie i ispolnenie', LG, 1967, No.35, p.12.
18. Rubinov, loc. cit.
19. A. Dezhkin, 'Gadanie o romashke', LG, 1969, No.30, p.12; A. Burnazyan, LG, 1969, No.38, p.11.
20. B. Finnasov, 'Vakhtery u knizhnykh polok', LG, 1968, No.22, p.12.
21. See also the article 'V voskresen'e vecherom', LG, 1967, No.30, p.12, in which L. Libedinskaya relates the case of a waitress who told two young people to vacate their table quickly as they had ordered only two coffees. 'My dear', she said, 'I've got a plan to fulfill!'
22. N. Il'ina, 'S balkona sbrasyvayut vannyy', LG, 1967, No.19, p.11; see also M. Karpovich, 'Razmyshleniya v paradnom pod''ezde', LG, 1969, No.49, p.10.
23. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'So vsemi udobstvami...', LG, 1970, No.43, pp.10-11.
24. A. Markusha, 'Vypolnyaya poruchenie zhivyykh...', LG, 1970, No.12, p.13.

25. See V. Perevedentsev, 'Kakoi gorod vygoden', LG, 1967, No.38, p.11; 'Zdes' zhivet pyat'desyat millionov - Sud'ba malogo goroda', LG, 1968, No.3, p.11; 'Goroda i gody', LG, 1969, No.9, p.12; 'Vse my, vmeste vsyatye', LG, 1970, No.18, pp. 10-11; see also O. Pchelintsev, 'Vpered, no kuda zhe?', LG, 1968, No.1, p.12; the opposite argument is put forward by B. Khorev, 'Kakoi gorod nuzhen?', LG, 1969, No.14, p.12; and V. Shkvarikov and I. Smolyan, 'Kakoi zhe gorod vygoden?', LG, 1969, No.31, p.10.

26. See, for example, N. Smelyakov, 'Doroga - samaya deshevaya', LG, 1967, No.11, p.14; N. Virta, 'Prevrashchenie v zakhlost'e', LG, 1967, No.12, p.11; A. Nikolaev, LG, 1967, No.28, p.10.

27. See, for example, Yu. Dolmatovskii, 'Chlen sem'i - avtomobil', LG, 1968, No.10, p.13; V. Shelkov, 'Voditeli i peshekhody', LG, 1970, No.38, p.11; S. Starostin and G. Emdin, 'Sobstvennaya mashina: blago ili bedstvie?', LG, 1970, No.38, p.11; Discussion Club, LG, 1970, No.46, pp.10-11; A. M. Tarasov, 'Sovetskii avtomobil' - zavtra', LG, 1971, No.1, p.10; D. P. Velikanov, 'Avtomobil' i my', LG, 1971, No.11, p.12; V. Moev, 'Vnimanie - krutoi pod'em!', LG, 1971, No.31, p.12; B. Belkin, 'Vorota nastezh'!', LG, 1971, No.39, p.11; readers' letters, LG, 1971, No.43, p.12; for a summary of the debates on private car ownership, see G. D. Andrusz, 'Housing Ideals, Structural Constraints and the Emancipation of Women', pp.12-14, in J. Brine, M. Perrie and A. Sutton, eds., Home, School and Leisure in the Soviet Union, London: Allen and Unwin, 1980.

28. I. Pachogin and V. Pussov, 'Za fasadami Nevskogo', LG, 1970, No.3, p.12.

29. Ya. Zhukovskii, from Kiev, suggests that the State bank lend money to people who want to buy cooperative flats. It would be advantageous for both customers and the State. It would help to reduce industrial turnover. Indeed, many young workers leave their jobs because they cannot get a flat. Bank loans should be made available for all kinds of purchases (car loans etc...); see Ya. Zhukovskii, 'Poluchite kvartiru v... sberkasse', LG, 1967, No.46, p.12; this suggestion, however, was not debated any further.

30. See H. W. Morton, 'Housing Quality and Housing Classes in the Soviet Union', in H. Herlemann, ed., Quality of Life in the Soviet Union, Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987.

31. I. Fonyakov, 'Sibir' est' Sibir'', LG, 1969, No.7, p.11; see also: V. Belousov, 'Pyat' shagov zodchestva', LG, 1971, No.3, p.10 and Evg. Dobrovol'skii, 'Proekt i more', LG, 1969, No.39, p.12.

32. Vl. Ishimov, 'Gorod - tri izmereniya', LG, 1967, No.10, p.12.

33. 'Ostryi vopros', LG, 1967, No.2, p.11.

34. A. Vasil'ev, 'A pochemu bez obsuzhdeniya?', LG, 1967, No.2, p.11.

35. A. Ladinskii, 'Mistika kvadratov', LG, 1968, No.17, p.10.

36. B. Svetlichnyi, 'Ne luchshe li bez mistiki?', LG, 1968, No.30, p.10.

37. M. Timyashevskaya (sociologist) and E. Shpizman (architect), '"Mistika kvadratov" ili "mistika komnat"?', LG, 1968, No.26, p.11.

38. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Priglasenie k samovaru', LG, 1968, No.4, p.12; see also A. Moshalenko, 'Razve dom nachinaetsya s kryshi?', LG, 1969, No.12, p.11 and M. Port, 'Chetyre stupeni k Olimpu', LG, 1971, No.49, p.12.

39. A. Baranov, 'Bol'shoi gorod - Ego sevodnya i zavtra', LG, 1967, No.17, p.10.

40. Yu. Polykhin, 'Ne fantaziya, a real'nost'', LG, 1968, No.45, p.10; this type of project was being worked out in several large cities with certain variations. Commenting on the Kiev project, the paper's correspondent in Kiev adamantly argued that the flats should contain private kitchens. 'Of course', he wrote, 'women must be freed ... from labour-intensive housework, from unnecessary tasks. But is there really a need to free women from the kitchen itself?'; see K. Grigor'ev, 'Eksperiment v Darnitse', LG, 1968, No.52, p.10; also see A. Polovnikov, 'Mnogoe viditsya po-inomu', LG, 1968, No.52, p.10.

41. See L. Zhukhovitskii, a great supporter of the DNB project, 'Byt' li DNB?', LG, 1970, No.3, p.12; and Ya. Zhuchok and E. Zuikova, 'Dom s privilegiyami', LG, 1969, No.2, p.11.

42. N. Osterman, LG, 1969, No.10, p.11; see also G. Orlov, 'Byt' li DNB?', LG, 1970, No.10, p.10 and three short contributions, LG, 1971, No.32, p.11; for an assessment of the discussions on the DNB, see G. D. Andrusz, op. cit., pp.3-23. The DNB seems to have been a watered-down version of the doma-kommuny of the 1920s. These ambitious collectivist schemes were eventually given up in the late twenties when the priority was to build housing as quickly and cheaply as possible. Andrusz points out that the 'House of the New Way of Life', built in Moscow in the 1960s, was an isolated case, the leadership having opted for a housing policy geared to building self-contained family dwellings as early as 1961. This policy reflected both the government's commitment to the nuclear family and the wishes of the public.

43. F. Novikov, 'Vremya tvorit', LG, 1969, No.39, p.12.

44. Ibid.

45. V. Belousov, 'Pyat' shagov zodchestva', LG, 1971, No.3, p.10.

46. Several contributors stress the need to investigate ways of integrating new buildings with old ones as harmoniously as possible, an idea fully supported by Literaturnaya gazeta, which organized a competition for the best project of the kind in collaboration with the Union of Architects. See, in particular: V. Andrievskii, 'Chtob ne preryvalas' svyaz' vremen...', LG, 1969, No.33, p.11; Yu. Yaralov, 'Garmoniya proshlogo i nastoyashchego', LG, 1969, No.44, p.10; LG, 1970, No.16, p.11, all page; Yu. Yaralov, 'Spory u drevnikh sten', LG, 1971, No.38, p.10.

47. See, for example, N. Belov, 'Pod sen'yu paradoksov', LG, 1967, No.23, p.11; V. Ginzburg, 'Bol'shie problemy malykh zhurnalov', LG, 1969, No.25, p.12; L. I. Sedov, 'Etika uchenogo', LG, 1970, No.29, p.11; the debate on research centres (approximately 60,000 words) covers a whole range of issues, in particular, the shortage of technical staff to alleviate the work of researchers, the lack of adequate academic journals, the slow pace of publishing, the impossibility of sacking bad researchers or closing bad institutes and the bureaucratic management of research.

48. N. Sokolov, 'Pochemu uvyala arkhitekturnaya kritika?', LG, 1971, No.42, p.11.

49. A. Izoitko, 'Pravo avtora', LG, 1971, No.7, p.12.

50. This debate is reminiscent of many Soviet novels which examine conflicts between creative scientists and bureaucrats or careerists, calling for more emphasis on individual talent and independent work. This is, of course, an issue closely related to the question of the relationship between the individual and the collective in Soviet society; see R. Marsh, Soviet Fiction since Stalin: Science, Politics and Literature, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, pp.83-6, pp.103-4 and pp.108-10.

51. One exception is central government's investment in the network of roads (see chapter 7, section 3), which is an issue concerning the economy at large.

52. State monopoly of housing is not total in rural areas, but the Brezhnev government promoted the construction of blocks of flats in the countryside, too; for the debate on rural housing see the introduction.

53. The idea that the bureaucracy has its own laws which do not coincide with those of technical and scientific rationality is extensively examined by B. Kagarlitsky in his book The Thinking Reed - Intellectuals and the Soviet State, 1917 to the Present, London and New York: Verso, 1988; see, in particular, chapter 1, 'The Bureaucratic Labyrinth or the Rules of the Games'; chapter 4, 'The Thaw' (especially pp.152-160); and chapter 6, 'Looking for a Way Out' (especially 'The Limits of Technocracy', pp. 256-259).

54. This issue will be more closely examined in chapter 8.

55. H. Herlemann, op. cit., 'What is and why we study the quality of life in the Soviet Union?'.

## VIII. IN DEFENCE OF THE CONSUMER

No debate on the pros and cons of the consumer society is to be found in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies. The expression itself remained entirely derogatory. The word 'consumer', however, was cropping up with increasing regularity and with a clearly positive connotation. Referring to Zhukhovitskii's article, 'Invitation to the samovar', O. Yanitskii, chairman of a research committee at the Soviet Association of Sociologists, argues that town-dwellers have become much more demanding because their basic housing needs have been met. 'The tenant (poluchitel')', he continues, 'has become a consumer' whose rising demands need to be studied and taken into consideration.<sup>1</sup> In all the articles examined in this chapter the underlying idea is that Soviet citizens no longer wish to be considered only as producers. They are eager to make their consumer needs known and to find mechanisms enabling them to defend their consumer rights.

Firstly, a great number of contributions call for a drastic expansion of the leisure and tourist industries. The introduction of the five-day working week, as well as the weakening role of ideological mobilization in the post-Stalin era, have increased Soviet people's amount of leisure time, especially in urban areas. It will be argued that the nature of their demands concerning this area of their lives

illustrates the connection between the move away from collectivism and the growth of consumer awareness.

Secondly, this chapter will examine the articles in which various practical measures are suggested in order to improve the quality of service in shops, cafes, restaurants and also the health service. Several ideas have been explicitly or implicitly borrowed from capitalistic practices.

Finally, an analysis of the contributions focusing on consumer rights will shed light on the contradictions existing between consumers' demands and the Soviet economic system.

#### 1. The Case for the Leisure and Tourist Industries

One of the recurrent themes in the material concerning leisure and tourism (approximately 50,000 words) is the urgent need to achieve a considerable increase in the number of leisure-oriented public places, such as cafes and restaurants, and to develop the tourist industry.

The discussion on tourism concentrates on the inadequate way the industry is being managed as well as the authorities' timid investment policy in this area of economic activity. While various high-ranking officials representing state organizations in charge of different aspects of the industry (communications, culture etc...) report on past achievements and future plans, it is frequently argued that this atomization of responsibilities is precisely what hampers the

development of the industry. A single organization should be in charge, as is now the case in Vilnius. The Lithuanian experiment has demonstrated, in particular, that with the new arrangement decision-makers enjoy more leeway in allocating money.<sup>2</sup> It is usually thought that the construction of hotels and catering facilities must be the responsibility of a separate organization.

The low priority given by the planning authorities to the development of tourism is deemed misjudged. Given the high demand for various forms of holiday-making already existing in the country and the great potential of foreign tourism, should international standards of quality be met, the industry could be a very profitable one. The authorities are urged to imitate Western governments in their commitment to a consistent investment policy, which should be geared towards providing the country with a comprehensive tourist infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of a well developed tourist industry is never opposed, probably because it goes hand in hand with the belief in the inalienable right of the Soviet worker to a yearly paid holiday. On the other hand not everyone seems to be keen on increasing the number of cafes and restaurants, thus encouraging the population to spend time in them on a more regular basis. Several contributions attack a clearly well entrenched puritanical attitude shared by a section of the general public as well as officialdom. L. Libedinskaya, one of the writers complaining about the acute lack of

restaurants, which, she argues, has made itself particularly felt since the introduction of the five-day working week, seems to have anticipated a frown of disapproval on some of her readers' faces when writing these lines:

At first sight it would seem that what we're talking about here is trivial. But our life is made up of these 'trivialities'. Our serenity, and, therefore, our health and capacity for work depend on them. After all, doctors have long established that nearly all the illnesses of the twentieth century are of nervous origin.<sup>4</sup>

Rubinov and Chernetskii do not take the precaution of justifying the need for more cafes and restaurants by emphasizing that they provide a form of relaxation which enhances people's capacity for work. Returning from a trip to Budapest, they put forward a passionate plea for the leisure industry. Time to leave our prejudices behind, they declare. Why is it that going to the theatre or partaking in amateur shows are considered as the only 'civilized' way of spending one's free time? Let's stop listening to these 'puritans' who argue that working people have to get up early in the morning and, therefore, do not need restaurants which stay open late at night. What about actors or workers working shifts, tourists and holiday makers? What about the week-ends?<sup>5</sup>

Obviously dazzled by the experience of Budapest by night, Rubinov and Chernetskii seem to have come back with an increased dislike of the austere work ethics promoted by official propaganda and the long-standing tendency to



automatically associate cafes and restaurants with heavy drinking and debauchery. In a previous article Rubinov had mentioned the case of an official who told him that dining-rooms in his ministry closed early in the evenings not so much for economic reasons as moral ones. The ministry did not want to be seen as encouraging drinking. Most participants in the debate believe, like Rubinov, that such a policy does not help to fight alcoholism. Inveterate alcoholics keep on drinking anyway, often in the streets, 'borrowing' glasses from the fizzy water vending machines.<sup>6</sup> A. Minchkovskii remarks that since many bars were closed down, good restaurants have been taken over by drunkards.<sup>7</sup> G.V. Yurchik, a taxi driver in Gorki, who enthusiastically supports Rubinov's views, argues that dry laws only succeed in boosting the black market, a fact he should be well aware of as many transactions of this kind take place around taxi ranks.<sup>8</sup>

The couple of official responses published on the subject are lukewarm, yet not hostile. (Efforts should be made to provide better facilities for the evenings, rather than the nights; the transport organizations must cooperate etc...) <sup>9</sup> Only one short article reiterates the puritanical views criticized earlier. It is followed by extracts from readers' letters commenting upon the need to have restaurants and cafes open late at night. Four are against the idea, eight are in favour.<sup>10</sup>

Not only do most contributors believe that the restrictive measures supposedly aimed at curbing alcoholism are ill-advised and counterproductive, they also see in them a reflection of the authoritarian nature of Soviet society whose citizens tend to be treated as irresponsible children. Why, Yurchik wonders, should decisions concerning the entire population be taken with only alcoholics in mind? Equally annoyed by the patronizing attitude of the authorities, Rubinov and Chernetskii remark that only good behaviour and 'civilized' drinking could be observed in the restaurants of Budapest, thus implying that the Soviets are quite capable of similar self-control.

On that subject, there is an amusing satirical piece by L. Likhodeev, mocking the quasi-military regime imposed upon holiday-makers in 'rest homes' (dom otdykha). As soon as you arrive, Likhodeev relates, you are told that the home closes at 11.00 p.m. and warned by the manager that, should you fail to abide by the rules of the establishment, you will be expelled, and your family and employer will be informed of your reprehensible behaviour; all this, Likhodeev continues, in the name of morality: 'All those who go to bed at 11.00 p.m. are morally clean. All those who go to bed after 11.00 p.m. are morally dirty'. On a more serious note, Likhodeev deems humiliating the assumption that all Soviet citizens are potential hooligans. 'After all', he sarcastically reminds 'rest home' managers, 'the majority of our country's population know it is wrong to break windows, turn trams

upside down, hang colleagues or wake up those who sleep'. He also objects to the personnel's systematic lack of sensitivity. 'The fiercest criminal', he argues, 'must be punished, yet not offended. But you offend the first person you happen to meet, considering this attitude as being the norm in dealing with people'.<sup>11</sup>

There is much evidence that Soviet people are less and less willing to let themselves be bossed around by self-appointed guardians of morality during their holidays. The popularity of sanatoria and 'rest homes', built by enterprises which heavily subsidize their employees' holidays in them, has significantly decreased. L. Pavlov quotes a survey indicating that only 15 per cent of Soviet people enjoy staying in sanatoria. According to a survey carried out by Literaturnaya gazeta, sanatoria and 'rest homes' are appreciated by only 30 per cent of the technical and scientific intelligentsia.<sup>12</sup>

That these places tend to be run in an authoritarian manner inspired by the collectivist ethos, does not alone account for their increasing unpopularity. There are several contributing factors; the fact, for instance, that they do not cater for couples and families.<sup>13</sup> Also, they offer a sedentary and health-oriented type of relaxation which cannot be to everyone's liking. Younger people, in particular, seem to favour more active holidays, such as camping, sight-seeing, hiking. There is also the fact, of course, that sanatoria and 'rest homes' cannot accommodate everyone.

Pavlov argues, however, that the growing number of 'dikari', i.e., people who go on holidays without holiday vouchers (putevki), reflects the public's desire for variety and independence. In the two surveys already mentioned, 40 per cent of the interviewees said they preferred holidaying without vouchers. Furthermore, the survey organized by Literaturnaya gazeta indicates that 29 per cent choose a semi-independent type of holiday using the facilities of the turbazy (tourism centres). On the whole, it follows from the various contributions that the Soviet public does not want more sanatoria and 'rest homes', but rather a better tourist infrastructure - camp sites (at the moment they meet only 20 per cent of the demand), hotels, better and more roads, as well as car services to cater for both group and individual motoring holidays.

The individualization of leisure time is also reflected in the frequent demand for small, more intimate cafes and restaurants. In his book Life in Russia, the journalist Michael Binyon advises visitors to the Soviet Union to try the restaurants in groups. 'Soviet restaurants', he remarks, 'seem happiest with groups, whereas individuals are usually left sitting forlornly in a corner for hours before being served.'<sup>14</sup> Judging by Literaturnaya gazeta, not all Soviet people seem to be keen on these large restaurants with dance floors and live orchestras, which, indeed, seem to be designed for groups. The general feeling is that there is a need for variety. There should be small restaurants where one

can spend a quiet evening with a friend or two, expensive ones for special occasions, snack-bars for those in a hurry. Opening hours could be different, too.<sup>15</sup>

Writing about leisure in the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, M. Binyon argued:

The collective consciousness, strongly reinforced by the ideological approach of the kollektiv and distrust of individualism ... also determines the pattern of Soviet leisure: organised excursions, groups and clubs ... rest-homes and sanatoria where millions of workers 'join their colleagues from work for the annual holiday in the sun.<sup>16</sup>

Binyon's comment, written at the beginning of the 1980s, concisely summarizes the approach to leisure which Literaturnaya gazeta was already criticizing in the late sixties and early seventies. There is, indeed, a close connection between the theory of collectivism and the pattern of Soviet leisure, and Literaturnaya gazeta questioned both in two separate, yet interconnected, series of debates. Collectivism implies that identical criteria are identified for all members of society or entire groups, hence its authoritarian nature as it ignores the diversity and complexity of the needs of individuals. The rejection of collectivism and the promotion of a more consumer-oriented society where individuals are in a better position to identify and satisfy their own needs, are consistent with one another.

Binyon's remark reminds us that the collectivist approach to the leisure industry remained the dominant one

all through the seventies. Indirectly, it also highlights the fact that Literaturnaya gazeta was publicizing unorthodox ideas, which had to wait until Gorbachev came to power to be implemented, if not systematically, at least by some individuals, for instance, in the co-operative movement.

## 2. The Case for a Consumer-Friendly Environment

Echoing the systematic criticism of the large organizations' contempt for the public, many contributions suggest the adoption of practices which would make the service and retail industry more consumer-friendly. Most of these articles concentrate on the need for opening hours more in tune with the life of the population and for better training of personnel dealing with the general public. The arguments put forward by the various contributors, mainly journalists, are rather repetitive and straightforward, and, therefore, will be briefly examined.

As a result of the introduction of the five-day working week, a great number of shops and public services are now closed during the week-ends, including Saturdays. The issue is not treated as a mere technical matter. It is perceived as the logical result of a social policy which fails to recognize Soviet citizens as consumers whose needs must come before any other consideration. This comment by A. Likhachev is typical:

It must not be decided for them [town-dwellers] when they have to go to the baths or the museum. One has to find out

when they go and determine opening hours accordingly.<sup>17</sup>

This implies that some people have to work while others rest or shop and, therefore, the principle of the five-day working week must be applied with greater flexibility.<sup>18</sup> It is sometimes pointed out that more realistic opening hours would considerably help women to cope with their double burden.<sup>19</sup>

Many of the articles examined in chapter 3, 'Perceptions of the Collective', contain complaints about the rudeness or even cruelty of staff in contact with the general public. The issue is occasionally discussed from a more practical angle. Il'ina argues that shop assistants and waiters should be better trained. They should be taught to address customers in a business-like manner and respect their privacy.<sup>20</sup> Rubinov criticizes the atmosphere of distrust prevailing in self-service shops where customers are treated as if they were potential shoplifters. (Some shops still hang portraits of thieves, a practice he deems both immoral and illegal.) Rather than make everyone uncomfortable, Rubinov suggests that managers follow the example of their Western counterparts who include the expected small loss caused by shoplifting in their overhead expenses.<sup>21</sup> In a previous article, Rubinov argued there was a general need to promote the presently low status enjoyed by staff working in the retail trade.<sup>22</sup> It is an area of the economic life which

should attract better educated personnel, capable of improving the cultural level of the tertiary sector.<sup>23</sup>

The sheer recurrence of these arguments is evidence of the growing consumer awareness of the Soviet population. Literaturnaya gazeta unhesitatingly and forcefully underlines the gap between increasingly sophisticated popular expectations and the primitive nature of what the system has to offer. Yet, while the authors of these contributions explicitly publicize consumer demands, they stop short of suggesting radical alternatives which would drastically transform the service and retail industries. They fall back on asking the large organizations to change their ways, which, judging by the articles exposing their managerial incompetence, they are not deemed capable of doing.

Only a very few articles suggest practices which are at variance with official ideology, like, for instance, the short debate on whether the practice of tipping waiters should be reinstated. L. Yunina argues that it is hypocritical to keep professing that tipping waiters is wrong while it is well known that the practice has, in fact, persisted in the form of bribery. She proposes cleaning up the catering trade by rehabilitating the practice of tipping the staff. Tips should be regarded as rewards to which waiters are entitled if the work has been well done in the same way as factory workers receive bonuses if the plan has been fulfilled. The idea, however, is overwhelmingly rejected by officials, readers as well as the editorial board of



Literaturnaya gazeta, who all associate it with an unregretted past. S. Okun, manager of a food kombinat in Moscow, supports the new scheme according to which all waiters receive the additional five per cent that customers pay for the service, a practice commonly used in the West. A reader objects, though, that this new measure has failed to guarantee an improvement in the quality of the service and why give an extra five per cent to a waiter who has been rude to you?<sup>24</sup>

The national health service is another area where it is suggested that a direct financial transaction between customers and providers of services might help to improve the quality of the service. Contributions on the health service (approximately 20,000 words) do not tell the whole truth, yet expose a number of serious failings, in particular, the shortage of hospital beds and medications, the poor conditions in which country doctors, mainly women, have to work (they are often not provided with transport to visit patients in remote villages), and the inadequacy of the ambulance service.<sup>25</sup>

More striking, however, is the harsh criticism levelled at the medical profession itself. Doctors and surgeons are frequently accused of being tactless, callous and corrupt. Shortcomings in the training of medical students, low wages and the tyrannies of the plan are occasionally presented as contributing factors.<sup>26</sup> But the main concern is that medical doctors are all-powerful, yet unaccountable to the public. It

is suggested by B. Volodin that doctors' salaries should vary according to the reputation they enjoy amongst patients.<sup>27</sup> More commonly, however, it is argued that the existence of a small 'private' sector in certain areas of medicine could help enhance the professionalism of the medical staff as well as reestablish the trust of the public towards doctors.

The writer Yu. Shcherbak relates the case of a relative in her early sixties who died of an appendicitis as a result of what might have been a professional mistake. The two surgeons in charge at the hospital did not see eye to eye as to whether a second operation should be performed, yet refused to ask for a third opinion. As patients do not have the right to consult specialists on a private basis, there was nothing that the family could do. Shcherbak concludes that it is wrong to think there are only two alternatives; on the one hand, a socialized and free medical service, on the other, private medicine as in capitalist countries. Shcherbak does not dispute the fact that the Soviet health service has been a wonderful achievement, yet ways must be found, he argues, to improve it:

What if, for instance, payments for private (privatnye) consultations with prominent specialists (consultations which, I repeat, would take place outside their working hours) were to be effected through the services of hospitals or clinics? What's wrong with that?<sup>28</sup>

A. Vishnevskii, a member of the Academy of Sciences, raises the issue of clinics which refuse to keep or admit

terminally ill patients because exceeding 'death quotas' is seen as a sign of poor performance and clinics which do so are investigated.<sup>29</sup> As indignant as its readers at the extreme bureaucratization of the service and its inhumanity, Literaturnaya gazeta suggests a rather unorthodox way out:

One of the most important achievements of our health service is the free treatment of patients. But there are cases where it is expedient to have a medical service that is not free, as well. It concerns, in the first instance, the care of chronic invalids and elderly patients.<sup>30</sup>

The question of whether everyone could afford it is conveniently left aside. There is evidence, however, that some people are not opposed to the idea of paying for medical care. The few already existing clinics where treatment has to be paid for are very popular indeed. Complaining that since the introduction of the five-day working week polyclinics no longer work on Saturdays, M. Yanovskaya remarks that on that day the number of patients visiting one of the 'paying' (platnaya) polyclinics in Moscow has increased by thirty per cent.<sup>31</sup> A pensioner thanks Literaturnaya gazeta for having been instrumental in persuading the authorities to build new premises for the very popular 'paying' clinic No.1 on Kirov street. The pensioner reminds readers of the argument used by V. Karbovskaya who wrote an article published by Literaturnaya gazeta in 1965 (No. 121) in which she publicized the clinic's need for a new building:

If thousands of people ask to be respected and given the opportunity, on

top of free treatment, of paying for comfort and help, it has to be done.<sup>32</sup>

The importance of these contributions should not be overestimated. They are isolated articles, easily missed in the course of a more cursory reading of the paper. The idea of medical doctors taking money from patients is not unanimously supported. I. Tager, for example, in his reply to Shcherbak agrees that patients should be allowed to consult physicians outside the hospital or clinic where they are treated, yet it should be a free service.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it is clear that no one questions the principle of free socialized medicine. It is interesting, however, to see the power of money and the purchase of certain medical services being reconsidered as an alternative, albeit partial, to the bureaucratization of the national health service.

Finally, a few words should be said about a couple of articles whose authors unabashedly marvel at the American advertising industry, which they regard as predominantly beneficial to the consumer. V. Tereshchenko, in particular, describes in great detail the basic principles of American advertising, as well as some of the techniques, emphasizing the wide range of skill it involves. While not denying its manipulative and exploitative nature, Tereshchenko argues it is caused by the fierce competition existing between producers in capitalist society. The Soviet social and economic system, the author claims, will safeguard Soviet consumers against this danger. Calling upon Lenin who advised

borrowing from capitalist practices which could be useful for the building of communism, Tereshchenko suggests that Soviet enterprises learn from the great 'technical and organizational experience' of the American advertising industry, leaving behind the 'unscrupulousness of business':

While in the conditions of the USA advertising serves, above all, the cause of profit, in our country it must become the educator of consumers, inculcating rational tastes in them, and participate in the fight for better quality goods.<sup>34</sup>

This contribution is not altogether unorthodox. It must be pointed out that there was a revival of Soviet advertising in the 1960s which went unopposed by the central authorities on the grounds that advertising helps to shift excess stocks of goods and introduce unfamiliar new products. Official ideologists also underlined the educational virtues of advertising for both consumers and the retail trade, precisely the type of arguments put forward by Tereshchenko.<sup>35</sup>

However, while Soviet advertising is predominantly used by distributors, in Tereshchenko's article a great deal of attention is paid to market research, which is regarded as evidence of the producer's willingness to take the opinions of consumers into account. The marketing of new products is seen as a means of developing tastes, and there is nothing wrong with 'creating a demand'.

Furthermore, although the author is careful to reassert the exploitative nature of Western advertising, which is

commonly accused by official ideologists of playing on the basest instincts of consumers, the clarity of his ideological position is somewhat muddled by his unconcealed enthusiasm for the highly sophisticated techniques of American advertising.

It is not clear how Tereshchenko proposes to apply a technique issuing from the competitive world of capitalism to the centrally planned economy of the Soviet Union. Yet the author's somewhat romantic view of advertising reveals a preoccupation, shared by many contributors to Literaturnaya gazeta, with making Soviet producers responsive to consumers' demands.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. In Defence of Consumer Rights

All the material examined in chapters 7 and 8 relentlessly exposes Soviet consumers' great dissatisfaction with the retail and service industries, as well as their feelings of helplessness in the face of the state organizations which manage them. Taking the issue one step further, Literaturnaya gazeta publicized a short, yet outspoken, debate on the issue of consumers' rights. The question is examined from a legal point of view by some contributors, while others investigate ways of articulating consumer demands and establishing a constructive dialogue between producers, or providers of services, and the public.

L. Libedinskaya argues that Soviet citizens ought to be made aware of the numerous laws and regulations, already in

existence, which protect their interests. For instance, customers should know that shops are not allowed to force unwanted goods upon them, which they often do when selling two different items together. Tenants should know that in theory housing authorities are obliged to compensate tenants whose hot water has been cut off for more than two weeks. If the law were enforced, tenants would recover only a few kopecks, but the point is that housing authorities would waste a great deal of time and money refunding them, and then would have an incentive to ensure that the repair be completed within two weeks. Libedinskaya concludes:

If we know the laws and defend our rights, not only shall we guard ourselves against many small (and sometimes not so small) inconveniences, but also we will stop indulging idlers and bureaucrats.<sup>37</sup>

Analysing the results of a survey carried out by Literaturnaya gazeta during one of its 'experiments' on the railway services, L. Velikanova remarks that the overwhelming majority of those who filled in the questionnaires are extremely angry at train conductors who refuse to issue tickets, even though the compartments are not full. Are they actually allowed to do this? Is there any recourse against their decisions? Velikanova argues that passengers must be informed of their rights, as well as of the duties of conductors, so that they know where they stand.<sup>38</sup>

While both Libedinskaya and Velikanova seem to expect the management of shops and organizations providing services

to inform the public of its rights, Rubinov, as sceptical as ever about the ability of officials to change their attitude, argues for the need to introduce laws binding them to look after their customers. At the moment, he complains in an article entitled 'Unequal partner', an enormous amount of time is wasted because of the low quality of the services, at the expense of both individuals and the national economy. It is the customer who serves the shop, the passenger who serves the transport organizations, and not the other way round. It is time, he continues, to take strong measures aimed at 'establishing an equal relationship between the individual and those enterprises whose job it is to serve him'. A law should be introduced which obliges organizations to pay customers compensation in case they fail to fulfil their obligations to them:

If the management of Aeroflot know that the passenger who has been held up must be fed at their expense, it is likely that the fog will clear more quickly and that they won't even contemplate combining two flights into one.<sup>39</sup>

After all, Rubinov impatiently reminds those in charge, the *raison d'être* of the Soviet service industry is not to make profits, but rather to serve the public. There is no inkling that Rubinov might think that it is precisely why officials are not particularly anxious to improve the services, but it is clear that he has no illusions as to their willingness to do so without the threat of financial reprisals. Furthermore, he considers his proposal perfectly



in tune with the officially promoted policies of 'intensifying the democratization' of Soviet society and increasing economic incentives in order to obtain better results.

Another series of articles suggests that appropriate channels be set up for consumers to articulate their criticisms and demands. The short debate, which took place in the second half of 1969, was triggered off by the editors of Literaturnaya gazeta, who invited experts, officials and readers to voice their opinions about three proposals: the setting up of an institute where sociologists would study the views of consumers, the formation of a consumers' association, and, finally, the publication of a consumer magazine, judging by the description given, something very similar to the Which? magazine published in Britain. It is hoped by Literaturnaya gazeta that these measures will help persuade manufacturers that the 'buyer is always right' and reduce the unacceptable amount of low quality, or even dud goods in shops. Quality control inspectors cannot be relied upon. There are only two hundred of them for the whole country and, what's more, goods which have been banned in one republic can be sold in another.<sup>40</sup>

Practically all the responses published by Literaturnaya gazeta support the basic argument put forward in the introductory article. K. V. Bol'shakov, RSFSR Deputy Minister of Trade, hopes that the setting up by the ministry of a commission made up of sociologists and psychologists whose

job it will be to study the opinions of consumers will help increase pressure on manufacturers.<sup>41</sup> V. V. Boitsovym, chairman of the committee for standards, measures and measuring devices attached to the USSR Council of Ministers, welcomes the idea of a consumers' association. Not only is the number of quality control inspectors ridiculously low, but inspectors belong to a variety of organizations the 'institutional interests' of which tend to prevail over those of the consumers. The primary function of the committee Boitsovym chairs is to defend the interests of industrial consumers (enterprises purchasing raw material or equipment), yet it is presently working out new standards of quality and new methods of enforcement for consumer goods. Nevertheless, Boitsovym concludes, a direct link needs to be established between manufacturers and consumers.<sup>42</sup> It is argued in a collectively written contribution from economists and engineers that this consumers' association should be allowed to publicize its work in the media.<sup>43</sup>

The discussion is clearly one-sided. Out of the five readers' letters closing the debate, only one disagrees with the idea of a consumers' association. More importantly, manufacturers are conspicuously absent from a debate which concerns them directly. It makes sense that representatives of the Ministry of Trade should support the formation of consumers' associations. As the economic system favours producers, trade and quality control bodies are likely to welcome grass root pressure in the hope it will undermine the

power of their rivals. The naive argument, advanced by the only dissenting reader, that in a socialist society the interests of consumers are defended by the state, has clearly lost ground amongst both the general public and officials, well aware of the institutional interests of their organizations.

However, the case for the consumers' associations should not be examined exclusively in the narrow context of conflicting institutional interests. Echoing the briefly suggested idea of an association of invalids and the positive publicity given to informal gatherings, this debate confirms the move towards the affirmation of the need for a civil society, which does not contradict the officially promoted call for the 'democratization of Soviet life', yet goes far beyond it.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion: Consumers' Demands in the Light of the Economic Debates

It is clear from the articles analysed in this chapter that Literaturnaya gazeta supported the case for a consumer-oriented society. The debate on the need to develop the tourist and leisure industries highlights the correlation between central planning and certain authoritarian aspects of Soviet society, thus lending some more weight to the argument in favour of a decentralization of the economy in order to meet increasingly individualized consumer demands.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the measures, suggested by some contributors,

aimed at protecting the interests of consumers and creating a more consumer-friendly environment, are rather limited. While testifying to the growth of consumer awareness amongst the population, they clearly offer inadequate solutions for an efficient promotion of consumer demands in the framework of the centrally planned economy.

This is a fact which is emphasized by several authors. It has already been shown in chapter 7 that it is commonly argued that the services suffer greatly from the tyrannies of the plan, the wage system, the bureaucratization of the professions and the atomization of responsibilities between organizations as well as their conflicting interests. Some articles, though not many, focus on the contradiction between the principle of central planning and the need to meet consumer demands in the retail trade. For instance, Literaturnaya gazeta published an interview of N. N. Mirotvortsev, deputy chairman of Gosplan (USSR), the interest of which does not lie so much in the official's answers as in the journalist's questions. Little impressed by the deputy chairman's announcement that investments in light industry for the period 1971-75 will be twice the amount allocated to heavy industry for the same period, A. Levikov asks several questions which obviously sum up the concerns of Soviet consumers: How can enterprises be stopped from producing low quality, old-fashioned or dud goods? Will consumer demand be better studied in the future? Can a greater degree of flexibility in planning and production be expected? How can

enterprises be encouraged to produce goods in smaller quantities as consumers hanker for variety?<sup>46</sup> Mirotvortsev concedes that there is a need to study consumer demand, yet on the whole his replies are nebulous.<sup>47</sup>

Another high-ranking official working for Gosplan, the economist N. Buzlyakov, defines the responsibilities of the planning organizations in more outspoken terms. He very simply shifts the blame for planning errors on to the industrial ministries and the enterprises, as well as on the USSR Ministry of Trade, thus revealing a conservative belief in the ability of the retail organizations to know what consumers want and to resist the pressure put on them to accept unwanted goods.<sup>48</sup>

Buzlyakov's contribution is followed by an article, entitled 'Choice', in which the reform-minded economist G. Lisichkin argues that discussing who is to blame for 'planning errors' is beside the point. The crux of the matter is that planning is bound to be inefficient as long as it is not based on a thorough analysis of the market:

... the individual has the opportunity to come 'out of himself', to look for ways of developing his personality. The variety of needs is such that it is quite natural that uniformity should give way to individual requirements and differences more and more often. In these conditions it is becoming increasingly difficult to plan the production of goods on the basis of standardized norms, which presuppose that all individuals purchase the same amount of books, fruit and mincing-machines.<sup>49</sup>

Another economic principle advocated by a number of writers is that supply should exceed demand. Shortages give rise to all sorts of negative practices. How can employees in the retail trade be forced to follow the rules protecting the interests of consumers, Il'ina argues, when they know perfectly well that customers have no alternative but to buy what is available in the shops?<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, Kuznetsova points out, when commenting upon the uniformity and dullness of Soviet clothing, many refuse to purchase goods they do not care for and buy fashionable clothes 'from under the counter' for great sums of money.<sup>51</sup>

This idea is extensively developed by Prof. E. Liberman in an article analysing the reasons for queues in shops.<sup>52</sup> Liberman claims that nobody believes any more that in the socialist society demand should exceed supply, a theory used in the past to justify the shortages. Only if supply exceeds demand, Liberman argues, and the consumer has the right to choose, will the quality of goods and services improve drastically. What's more, this principle must not be considered alien to socialism:

Some are disturbed by the analogy with capitalist competition (konkurentsiya). But in this case it is purely a terminological scarecrow. Our type of competition (sorevnovanie), which aims to achieve the best standards of service for Soviet consumers, will not lead to the ruin or bankruptcy of enterprises, nor will it lead to their being bought up by monopolists... In the same way as profit (pribyl') in our conditions does not clear the way for capitalist profit (nazhiva), competition (sostyazanie) between our enterprises will not lead to

anything even remotely conforming to the essence and results of capitalist competition.<sup>53</sup>

Contributions from reform-minded economists, such as Liberman and Lisichkin do not make up the bulk of the material on consumer issues. However, the views expounded in their articles belong to a broader discussion which concerns the whole economic system. Therefore it is necessary to examine briefly the main themes recurring in the economic section of the paper in order to assess to what extent Literaturnaya gazeta was committed to the idea of a more consumer-oriented economy.

The economic section of the paper is very large (approximately 530,000 words).<sup>54</sup> It occupies slightly more than twice the space allocated to the articles examined in parts II and III combined. A fair amount of publicity is given to extremely harsh criticisms of the development policies implemented in the Far North and Siberia (appalling living conditions, wasteful exploitation of raw material, pollution etc...) Yet the overwhelming majority of the material deals with the nature of the economic system and the 1965 economic reform. No separate debate on the consumer sector is to be found, which is perhaps not so surprising. M. McAuley argues that the economic debate was encouraged by Khrushchev because of the unexpected low rate of growth in the sectors of the economy traditionally favoured by central planning organizations. While not dismissing the issue of priorities completely, economists no longer saw the

proportion of resources intended for the consumer sector in relation to heavy industry and defence as the main issue. The discussion focused on the very nature of central planning.<sup>55</sup>

First of all, there is a broad consensus among most contributors to Literaturnaya gazeta about the progressive nature of the reform and the new ideas it promotes, in particular, the notion that quality, productivity and profit, rather than gross output, must be the criteria used to gauge industrial performance. Other popular themes are self-financing of enterprises and the need to increase managerial powers and material incentives. Some authors give enthusiastic accounts of enterprises introducing new methods of management, for instance, the famous Shchekino chemical plant where management set out to tackle, among other things, the problem of the hoarding of labour.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, there is a general and strong feeling that the reform has been thwarted by the planning organizations and the ministries, which have shown no sign of wanting to change their methods of work. These institutions are still frequently criticized for imposing unrealistic targets upon enterprises, altering plans without consulting managers or using the same old criteria for the allocation of supply and wage funds. Managers have remained reluctant to stop hoarding labour as supplies keep being erratic and enterprises are still expected to provide labour resources for work outside their premises (harvest, construction etc...). As a result of the planning organizations and



ministries' *de facto* refusal to relinquish some of their enormous power, the increased economic autonomy promised to managers by the reform has not materialized; neither has profit become the yardstick by which industrial performance is measured.

Literaturnaya gazeta published some bold contributions, in particular from the reform-minded economist Birman, who, in one of his articles, calls for the creation of 'economic conditions which would leave enterprises with only two alternatives: that of working well or closing down!' - a view which is far from being unanimously supported by other participants in the debate.<sup>57</sup> The idea of using the market as a regulating mechanism is occasionally advocated, yet only in relation to supplies which the planning organizations are deemed incapable of rationalizing, hence the phenomenon of supply hoarding and the existence of a flourishing black market.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, on the whole, the idea of the market is very little discussed. Even Birman, in an article taking stock of the reform after five years of its implementation, leaves the question of a socialist market aside, although he is unenthusiastic, to say the least, about the changes in the management of the economy. While conceding that some improvement can be observed in the planning stage and some degree of self-financing has been taking place in a number of enterprises, he notes that technical progress is still slow to come as managers have no incentive to innovate,

productivity has not increased sufficiently, overmanning is still the rule, and, very importantly, profit still plays a minimal part in the life of the enterprise. Birman believes that the programme of the reform needs to be modified, remarking, however, that, whatever the inadequacies of the present reform may be, it has not been fully implemented because of the unwillingness on the part of the planning organizations and the ministries to cooperate.<sup>59</sup>

A. Nove points out that while the decree of 1965 prescribed a move towards greater managerial powers, it also restored the All-Union industrial ministries, thus undermining the influence of republican and other regional planning organizations considerably. Therefore, the decree itself revealed the leadership's clear intention to preserve a highly centralized economy.<sup>60</sup> Yet, although Literaturnaya gazeta clearly sides with the opponents of extreme central planning, it cautiously avoids any direct criticism of the lack of political will to curtail the power of Gosplan and the All-Union ministries. On the other hand, the paper gives a great deal of attention to issues which, albeit not devoid of importance, remain subordinate to the more general debate on central planning. There is, for instance, the discussion on the need to computerize the management of enterprises, seen by some as a panacea while others argue that, however useful computerization may be in regulating production, the process still remains hampered by an unpredictable supply system. There is also the extensive debate on the need to

train a new breed of managers, capable of delegating unlike the 'little Stalins' of old. (Business and management schools in the USA seem to be as enticing as the American advertising industry in the eyes of several contributors.) Finally, the question of material incentive is widely discussed. Wage-leveiling policies are unpopular, as well as the still predominant practice of awarding bonuses on the basis of collective, rather than individual, performance.<sup>61</sup>

The weakness of the economic debates published by Literaturnaya gazeta is not surprising. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia the conservatives quickly re-established their authority, removing from the 1965 reform everything that could have diminished the role of the state in the management of the economy. The hopes entertained by the reform-minded economists of the sixties were finally dashed by the December 1969 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which opted for the old authoritarian centralized approach with a reaffirmed commitment to the development of science, technology and improved management techniques. At the beginning of the seventies it became increasingly difficult, and eventually impossible, to defend the theory of the socialist market economy in the legal press.<sup>62</sup>

The political constraints imposed by the Brezhnev administration are clearly reflected in the timorous contributions on economic issues published by Literaturnaya gazeta. There is no doubt that the great emphasis laid on the frustrations of Soviet consumers is greatly undermined by the

paper's failure to publicize an open and thorough debate on ways of dismantling the command economy, which is intrinsically unresponsive to demands from both producers and consumers.

At the same time, Literaturnaya gazeta chose to voice the disappointment of the reform-minded section of the intelligentsia and contributed to bringing discredit upon the existing system. The harsh criticism systematically levelled at planning authorities, ministries, organizations providing services and the retail trade, which permeates the economic section as well as the debates concentrating on consumer issues, reveals a keen and openly expressed aversion to the command economy. Furthermore, although Literaturnaya gazeta was in no position to tackle the political forces working for the preservation of central planning, it clearly spoke on behalf of Soviet citizens, voicing their consumer demands with a high degree of militancy. The implicit subversiveness of Literaturnaya gazeta also lies in its consistent efforts to place the issue of consumer rights within the broader context of a policy for the genuine democratization of society.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Priglasenie k samovaru', LG, 1968, No.4, p.12 (see chapter 7, section 3); O. Yanitskii, 'Gorozhanin - Kakov on?', LG, 1968, No.12, p.11.
2. Interview of V. Yakelaitis, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Lithuanian SSR by A. Vasil'eva, LG, 1969, No.3, p.12.
3. See LG, 1967, No.6, p.12, all page; L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Feshenebel'nost' stuchitsya v dver'', LG, 1967, No.38, p.13; G. Zhukov, 'A svobodnykh mest vse net!', LG, 1969, No.13, p.12; D. Levoneskii, 'Kuda zovet muza dal'nykh stranstvii', LG, 1969, No.18, p.12; F. Andreev, 'Safir v fanernoi oprave', LG, 1969, No.26, p.12; V. Vershkova-Sdobnova, 'Ya rabotayu gidom', LG, 1969, No.32, p.12; I. Gummer, Volgograd, 'Million gostei goroda-geroya...', LG, 1969, No.42, p.12; letter from A. F. Petrov, LG, 1969, No.52, p.10; P. Oldak, 'Lyudyam - radost', kasne - dokhod', LG, 1971, No.23, p.13.
4. L. Libedinskaya, 'V voskresen'e vecherom...', LG, 1967, No.30, p.12.
5. A. Rubinov and L. Chernetskii, 'Gorod zhivet i noch'yu', LG, 1968, No.13, p.12.
6. A. Rubinov, 'Syadem za stol!', LG, 1967, No.34, p.13.
7. A. Minchkovskii, 'V chas sukhogo zakona', LG, 1967, No.4, p.13.
8. Letter from G. V. Yurchik, LG, 1968, No.23, p.10.
9. See I. Shevelev's letter, LG, 1968, No.23, p.11; and A. Struev, USSR Minister of Trade, 'Torgovlya i sluzhba otdykha', LG, 1968, No.24, p.13.
10. See readers' letters, LG, 1968, No.23, p.11; The question of alcoholism is also examined in half a dozen articles which highlight the link between heavy drinking and social problems such as domestic violence, absenteeism at work and crime. Apart from a few readers' letters, these contributions do not advocate prohibitive laws and sanctions. Their authors challenge the moralistic attitude and complacency displayed by both the government (which benefits a great deal from the sales of vodka) and the population at large. They call for more research into the social factors which contribute to the persistence of the population's drinking habits, such as, for example, bad living and working conditions, and suggest a variety of measures, including the setting up of self-help groups and the increased production of light wines; see, for example, B. Levin, 'Sotsial'nyi portret alkogolika', LG, 1970, No.11, p.12. and A. Rubinov, 'Ryumki - vverkh dnom!', LG, 1971, No.22, p.11.
11. L. Likhodeev, 'Moral'nyi oblik otdykhayushchego', LG, 1968, No.34, p.13.
12. L. Pavlov, 'Otdykh v "rareze"', LG, 1969, No.49, p.11; and P. Oldak and Ts. Dagbatsyrenov, 'Turizm: otsenki i suzhdeniya', LG, 1971, No.43, p.13.

13. See readers' letters, LG, 1971, No.43, p.13.
14. M. Binyon, Life in Russia, London: Granada Publishing, 1985, p.109.
15. A. Minchkovskii, loc. cit.; see also A. Rubinov, 'Syadem za stol!', LG, 1967, No.34, p.13 and L. Pavlov, 'Delo bylo vecherom, delat' bylo nechego', LG, 1971, No.38, p.12.
16. Binyon, op. cit., p. 104.
17. A. Likhachev, 'Sumatoshnaya subbota', LG, 1968, No.11, p.10.
18. A. Likhachev, 'A kak zhe v dni otdykha', LG, 1967, No.50, p.12.
19. See, for example, Likhachev, ibid.; and L. Libedinskaya, 'Khotelos' by uslyshat' otvet...', LG, 1968, No.32, p.11.
20. N. Il'ina, 'Poprostu, po-domashnemu', LG, 1968, No.12, p.12.
21. A. Rubinov, 'Koeffitsient zabyvchivosti', LG, 1971, No.40, p.12.
22. Literaturnaya gazeta published a long letter in which a woman explains why she decided to leave her job in an icecream storehouse. She complains about the amount of redtape, but mainly about the fact that everyone steals and cooks the books. She argues it would not happen if the staff working in the retail trade received decent wages including material incentives coming from the profits made. See V. Krupenikova, 'Pochemu ya ushla iz trgovli', 1967, No.24, p.11.
23. See 'Student predlagaet uslugi', LG, 1968, No.24, p.13; L. Yunina, 'Tak li strashny chaevye?', LG, 1969, No.7, pp.10-11; see also: L. Libedinskaya, 'V voskresen'e vecherom...', LG, 1967, No.30, p.12; Replies from E. Furtseva, USSR Minister of Culture and other officials, LG, 1968, No.2, p.10; A. Rubinov and K. Serebryakov, 'Den' otkrytykh dverei', LG, 1968, No.26, p.12; A. Likhachev, 'Vecher, konets nedeli', LG, 1968, No.29, p.11; V. Konikov, 'Kak popast' na vystavku', LG, 1970, No.4, p.11; A. Rubinov, 'Klient, rasskazhi biografiyu', LG, 1971, No.50, p.13.
24. L. Yunina, 'Tak li strahny chaevye?', LG, 1969, No.7, pp.10-11; S. Okun, 'Net, ne chaevye', LG, 1969, No.8, p.12; survey of readers' letters, LG, 1969, No.10, p.12.
25. See in particular: I. Davydovskii, 'Oshibki vracha', LG, 1967, No.33, p.12; V. Topolyanskii, 'Skoroi pomoshchi', LG, 1967, No.39, p.13; S. Voronin, 'Vrach na doroge', LG, 1970, No.13, p.10; E. Tareev, 'Kto vy, sovremennyi doctor?', LG, 1971, No.3, p.12; Interview of N. I. Malov, Head of Department of Health and Medical Industry of Gosplan (USSR), LG, 1971, No.8, p.11; V. V. Vinogradov, 'Vrach - universal ili uzki spetsyalist?', LG, 1971, No.9, p.11; for an analysis of the Soviet health service, see M. G. Field, 'Medical Care in the Soviet Union: Promises and Realities', in H. Herlemann, ed., Quality of Life in the Soviet Union, Boulder and London: Westview press, 1987.

26. A reader wrote to complain that her daughter had been vaccinated by the school doctor against the advice of her general practitioner. The school doctor, who was trying to fulfill her 'vaccination plan' told the girl not to tell her mother; see P. F. Zdradovskii, 'Ukol po sekretu', LG, 1967, No.13, p.10.

27. B. Volodin, 'Chelovek i bol'nitsa', LG, 1968, No.27, p.11.

28. Yu. Shcherbak, 'Etika vracha ili muzhestvo khirurga', LG, 1967, No.15, p.12.

29. A. Vishnevskii, 'Nash dolg - istselyat'!', LG, 1967, No.30, p.11.

30. 'Chelovechnost' - podlinnaya i mnimaya', LG, 1967, No.49, p.11.

31. M. Yanovskaya, 'Pust' otdykhayut mediki - ne meditsina...', LG, 1968, No.14, p.10.

32. Letter from Ya. Melamedov, LG, 1967, No.29, p.11.

33. I. Tager, 'Est' li mera chutkosti?', LG, 1967, No.26, p.12.

34. V. Tereshchenko, 'Psikhologiya i reklama', LG, 1967, No.6, p.13.

35. For an extensive study of Soviet advertising see Ph. Hanson, Advertising and Socialism, London: Macmillan, 1974, especially pp.1-14 and 49-72.

36. See also, Vl. Sanin, 'Sto pyat'desyat stranits o reklame', LG, 1969, No.43, p.10.

37. L. Libedinskaya, 'O kozyr'ke, pravakh i obyazannostyakh', LG, 1970, No.43, p.13.

38. L. Velikanova, 'Passazhir desyatoi polki', LG, 1970, No.20, p.12.

39. A. Rubinov, 'Neravnyi partner', LG, 1968, No.5, p.13.

40. LG, 1969, No.28, p.10.

41. K. V. Bol'shakov, 'Vsyskatel'nyi kontroler', LG, 1969, No.28, p.10.

42. V. V. Boitsovym, 'Organisatsiya potrebitelei nuzhna!', LG, 1969, No.33, pp.12-13.

43. A. Glichev, V. Panov, G. Azgal'dov and E. Raikhman, 'I dom, i konfeta...', LG, 1969, No.33, pp 12-13; see also: Vl. Voina, 'Vashe mnenie o firme "mnenie"', LG, 1969, No.36, p.11.

44. See the debate on the invalids, chapter 3, section 2; and the material on informal gatherings, chapter 5, section 1.

45. The debate on the invalids analysed in chapter 3 already established a link between the neglect of the individual and the nature of the economic system.

46. See also articles on the difficulties encountered by the craft industry, V. F. Ryndin and R. Sheiko, LG, 1970, No.51, p.13; and Buzlyakov on the enterprises' reluctance to produce labour-intensive and low-profit products, LG, 1971, No.48, p.10.

47. Interview of N. N. Mirotvortsev, '"Vsesoyuznyi univermag" sem'desyat pyatogo goda', LG, 1971, No.8, p.10.
48. N. Buzlyakov, 'Semeinyi byudzheta. Dokhody - raskhody', LG, 1971, No.48, p.10; See Ph. Hanson, The Consumer in the Soviet Economy, London: Macmillan, 1968, especially chapter 8, 'Mechanisms for Adjusting Supply to Consumer Demand'.
49. G. Lisichkin, 'Vybor', LG, 1971, No.48, p.10.
50. N. Il'ina, 'Svetyashchiesya tablo', LG, 1971, No.20, p.11.
51. L. Kuznetsova, 'Mini, midi, maksi...', LG, 1971, No.5, p.12.
52. See also V. Perevedentsev, 'Na chem ochered' derzhitsya?', LG, 1968, No.17, p.10 and L. Zhukhovitskii, 'Pochem ekonomiya...', LG, 1969, No.3, p.10.
53. E. Liberman, 'Ochered': anamnez, diagnoz, terapiya - O somnitel'noi teorii polnoi zagruzki', LG, 1968, No.12, p.10.
54. This figure includes the material on agriculture, which will not be examined in this chapter.
55. M. McAuley, Politics and the Soviet Union, Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 238-9.
56. See, for example, V. Moev, 'Uspekhi', LG, 1969, No.32, p.10. The Shchekino experiment has been analysed by many social scientists both in the West and the Soviet Union. See, for instance, McAuley, Politics and The Soviet Union, op. cit. pp.242-3.
57. I. Birman, 'Neotvratimost', LG, 1967, No.2, p.10.
58. See, for example, V. Chernyavskii, 'Puti k bogatstvu', LG, 1971, No.37, p.10.
59. I. Birman, 'Reforma - god pyatyi - mysli posle plenuma', LG, 1970, No.7, p.10.
60. A. Nove, An Economic History of the USSR, Penguin Books, 1986, pp.374-6.
61. This brief summary of the economic debates is based on a close reading of the economic section. The material is so copious, though, that it is impossible to quote even the most interesting contributions.
62. M. Lewin, Stalinism and the Seeds of Soviet reform - The Debates of the 1960s, London: Pluto Press, 1991, pp.275-6; B. Kagarlitsky, The Thinking Reed: Intellectuals and the Soviet State, 1917 to the Present, London and New York: Verso, 1988, Chapter 5, section 2.



## PART FOUR

### THE LEGAL SYSTEM ON TRIAL

During the years 1967-71 Literaturnaya gazeta allocated a substantial amount of space to contributions on crime and legal matters (approximately 180,000 words). While focusing on certain aspects of the legislation or the judiciary system, these articles often turn out to be sources of information about the country's social problems. Indeed, one possible approach would be to examine the social issues raised by the numerous court cases referred to in the articles. The much less frequent, yet outspoken, reports on law and order also bring to light social evils that used to receive little or no coverage in the pre-glasnost' Soviet press. There is, for example, Cherepakhova's remarkable piece about a supposedly successful exercise in law enforcement in the Ukrainian village of Chigirinskii, which gives her the opportunity to describe in some detail the predicament of many similar uprooted rural communities, riven by alcoholism and domestic strife, fighting and vandalism, theft and juvenile delinquency.<sup>1</sup>

Admittedly, in the late sixties Literaturnaya gazeta was not the only publication to dabble in social realism while

debating legal issues. In 1968, for instance, only one year after the paper's new format was launched, the monthly law review Chelovek i zakon was founded as part of a general effort to enhance the legal awareness of the population.<sup>2</sup> It is rather difficult to establish whether the somewhat surprising popularity of the review all through the seventies stemmed from the Soviet public's growing concern for legality, or whether it testified to its craving for human stories revealing the 'New Soviet Man''s capacity for reprehensible behaviour. The fact remains that accounts of court cases provide valuable, albeit fragmentary, information on the state of the Soviet nation.

However rewarding such a reading of the material on crime and legal issues may be, a different approach will be adopted here, partly because Literaturnaya gazeta is likely to contain a much less comprehensive and vivid exposition of social 'negative phenomena' than the above-mentioned specialized publication. More importantly, this study seeks to reflect the main concern of the paper, which was to bring the inadequacies of Soviet law to the attention of its readers.

The contributions on crime and legal matters fall into two broad categories. Some of them concentrate on specific areas of the law; others raise questions pertaining to the legal system in general.

The number of articles dealing with specific pieces of legislation is relatively small (approx. 25,000 words),

yet a variety of issues are tackled. One day it is a plea for the introduction of legislation against cruelty to pets in all the republics of the Union; the next, a fierce attack on industrial managers and trade-unions who unabashedly flout labour laws aimed at protecting workers from health hazards and industrial injuries.<sup>3</sup> However, most of the articles on particular areas of the law deal with family problems and economic crimes. For instance, a couple of articles examine the new legislation on divorce procedures, the bone of contention being not so much the liberalization of the law as the issue of financial responsibility for children of divorced or unmarried parents; the lawyer N. M. Ershova argues that fathers should be obliged to pay alimony while her male colleague, A. Belyavskii, suggests that they be let off the hook and that alimony be replaced by substantially increased child benefits.<sup>4</sup> On several occasions L. Libedinskaya harshly criticizes housing laws which leave divorcees with no alternative but to keep living together.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a few articles raise the issue of the inability of the law to protect children and teenagers adequately, either because the problems of 'difficult children' are incompetently addressed by the courts and law-enforcing agencies, or because personnel working in orphanages can often get away with ill-treating children.<sup>6</sup>

The most interesting contributions on economic law are those which analyse court cases where managers have been accused of unlawful activities in the execution of their

duties. All the different authors agree that managers who are committed to running their plants or farms efficiently cannot do otherwise than break some of the hundreds of obstructive, often obsolete, laws which regulate, or rather are supposed to regulate, the country's economic life, in particular laws restricting the use of funds. The argument is always expounded with great candour and openness. For example, A. Shleer, an investigator, quotes the case of a dishonest foreman who cooked the books partly in order to pay his workers who had been idle through no fault of their own, but because supplies had not been delivered on time. Shleer draws the following conclusion:

... and his [the foreman's] logic is very simple: 'If I have to cook the books in the interest of production, then why not cook them for my own profit, too?'... Of course the overwhelming majority of builders do not do such things. They are honest, decent people. Still, they too have to break the law because sometimes there isn't any other way. And investigators find themselves in a position where they have to engage in some strange reasoning: 'Here there's been forgery, yet there doesn't seem to have been any serious crime; after all he hasn't pocketed a single kopeck for himself. On the other hand, that one has. He is a plunderer...' But the problem is that there has been forgery in both cases.<sup>7</sup>

The authors of these articles call for a re-examination of the economic law, which, they insist, should not punish managers for being enterprising and efficient.<sup>8</sup> This position is in line with the paper's defence of shabashnichestvo. Indeed, the hiring of informal building teams is not

prohibited by the law, yet leads to illegal practices as supplies and the money needed for the wages usually have to be illegally obtained.

However outspoken and unambiguous Literaturnaya gazeta's position on the issue may be, it must be emphasized that the point is made in only a small number of articles and that none of them triggered off any lengthy debate analysing the reasons for such a situation and ways of putting it right. This is not altogether surprising. It makes sense that the great limitations placed on the economic debate should have made themselves felt in the discussions of the economic law. The inadequacy of the legislation is, indeed, intrinsically linked with the nature of the economic system as a whole, a fact which has been demonstrated for a considerable number of years by Western economists.<sup>9</sup>

This brief survey of contributions dealing with specific areas of the law shows that they were somewhat limited in scope. Furthermore, most of them raise issues which go beyond the legal dimension and need to be analysed in the context of the social and economic problems to which they are related.

The present study will concentrate on these areas of the debate which raise issues about the very nature of the judiciary system. During the five years currently under examination Literaturnaya gazeta gave a great deal of importance to two main questions. Firstly, a substantial amount of space was allocated to contributions questioning official theories in the field of criminology, including the

question of penalties and society's attitude towards offenders. Secondly, the paper publicized the debate on the shortcomings of the criminal procedure, paying particular attention to the procuracy and the preliminary investigation, the role of public assessors and that of defence lawyers.

Literaturnaya gazeta did not pioneer the search for ways of ensuring a better protection of citizens' rights. The process of change was triggered off by the XXI and XXII Congresses of the CPSU (1959 and 1961), at which Stalin was accused of violating socialist legality and Vyshinskii's ideas were fiercely attacked. The 1961 Party programme promoted the notion of socialist law and order and advocated the fullest extension of personal freedom and citizens' rights. As a result of these major political developments, the powers of the secret police were considerably curtailed and new, more liberal, codes were introduced.<sup>10</sup>

Many Western writers on Soviet law have emphasized the limited impact of the Soviet legal reform on the protection of the citizens by the law. Berman argues that ten years after Stalin's death Soviet law is still totalitarian, in particular because political power continues to be beyond the scrutiny or control of legislative or judicial bodies and because it remains the law of a planned economy.<sup>11</sup> Johnson remarks that freedom of expression is guaranteed as long as it is used, he quotes, 'in conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to strengthen the socialist system'.<sup>12</sup> According to Makepeace the new emphasis on the

rights of individuals does not ensure their protection against the state as official ideology still preaches that individuals' rights and interests cannot be in conflict with those of the socialist state.<sup>13</sup> As for the former Soviet lawyer Konstantin Simis, he believes that the principle of legality does not operate at all in the Soviet Union as the all-powerful CPSU places itself above the law.<sup>14</sup>

It would be unreasonable to expect Literaturnaya gazeta to have denounced the Party's hold on the legal system or the restrictions placed on freedom of speech. Nothing is to be found on these questions apart from A. Chakovskii's ugly piece condemning the dissident writers Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovol'skii and Laskova, who, he claims, were given a fair trial, his key argument being that freedom of opinion must be used to 'improve the socialist society, not to destroy it'.<sup>15</sup>

While this crude attack on dissidents by the chief-editor must not be dismissed lightly - it is, after all, a sinister reminder of the paper's ultimate subservience to the political establishment - it would be wrong to judge the political significance of Literaturnaya gazeta solely on the basis of Chakovskii's isolated, though unambiguous, outburst of intolerance and unshakeable faith in Soviet justice. The debates which will be examined in the next two chapters reveal a great deal of dissatisfaction with the legal system and raise questions about the nature of the relationship between the individual and the state, which are to some

extent reminiscent of some of the objections made by the above-mentioned Western critics.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. E. Cherepakhova, 'Chigirinskii opyt: prestupnosti net!', LG, 1969, No.38, p.12, and a letter from I. Kh. Golovchenko, Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian Republic, LG, 1969, No.52, p.10: Cherepakhova openly argues that the high crime rate in the village is closely connected with the fact that most of the villagers are pereselentsy, i.e., new settlers, who had been reluctant to leave their native village, their private plots and orchards. LG points out that the Chigirinskii experiment has already been carried out with great success in nine thousand Ukrainian rural communities and will be carried out in another six thousand villages, thus making no secret of the high level of lawlessness in large parts of the countryside. The Chigirinskii experiment is based on the idea that the fight against rampant crime requires not only police intervention but also the involvement of the whole population.

A dozen articles on police matters can be found in LG between 1967 and 1971, in particular: some contributions on the Chigirinskii experiment; a few isolated cases of policemen, from the same town, who have violated 'the socialist legality': A. Zlobin, 'Pozhar v Taruse', LG, 1968, No.40, p.11; Evg. Bogat, 'Shtraf v desyat' rublei', LG, 1971, No.5, p.11 and the reply from the Minister of Internal Affairs, LG, 1971, No.19, p.12; a round table on the need for the police to improve their relations with the population, LG, 1969, No.7, p.10; there is also an unintentionally amusing article from the American communist newspaper Daily World where Soviet policemen are reported to read the Marxist classics or theoretical journals and discuss the latest international and domestic news during their breaks at work: Mike Davidov, 'Na ulitsakh mir i pokoi!...' with a comment by I. Karpets', LG, 1970, No.30, p.13.

2. See W. E. Butler, Soviet Law, London: Butterworths, 1988, p.97: Chelovek i zakon is a publication of the Ministry of Justice aimed at the general public.

3. See N. Kh. Arutyunyan, 'Takoi zakon prinyat', LG, 1967, No.51, p.11; and I. Dik, 'Gde ty, "trudovoi prokuror"?', LG, 1967, No.10, p.10: this emotional piece by the writer Iosif Dik is the more remarkable because as a rule LG seems to have little to say about the working conditions of the 'revolutionary class'.

4. N. M. Ershova, 'Chelovek i zakon', LG, 1967, No.2, p.11; and A. Belyavskii, 'Ostorozhno - zakon!', LG, 1967, No.17, p.11.

5. L. Libedinskaya: 'Izhdivenets', LG, 1967, No.11, p.12; 'Zakon i kvartira', LG, 1967, No.36, p.13; and 'Dobytkhik', LG, 1968, No.16, p.12.

6. See E. Rzhevskaya, 'Writer's Opinion - Mal'chishke chetyrnadtsat' let'', LG, 1967, No.29, p.10; F. Kuznetsov, 'Shumyat sosny v Rudnevke...', LG, 1967, No.40, p.12; 'Posle vystuplenii L.G....', LG, 1967, No.50, p.12; and 'Prestuplenie v detdome', LG, 1970, No.29, p.12: the crime

reported by this reader from Rostov on the Don seems to be the sexual abuse of a little girl by a 'depraved person' (porochnyi chelovek). The man was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment. The other staff of the home were also prosecuted for attempting to hide the truth from the court.

7. A. Shleer, 'Vyvodilovka', LG, 1967, No.49, p.13.

8. See also Yu. Kharov, 'Sudebnaya oshibka', LG, 1969, No.27, p.10; and the round table, 'Director i zakon', LG, 1970, No.31, pp.10-11.

9. See, in particular, J. S. Berliner, Factory and Manager in the USSR, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957.

10. The legal reforms of the early sixties have been analysed by several Western scholars: see, in particular, H. J. Berman, Justice in the USSR - An Interpretation of Soviet Law, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963, ch.2; E. L. Johnson, Introduction to the Soviet Legal System, London: Methuen, 1969, ch.3; R. W. Makepeace, Marxist Ideology and Soviet Criminal Law, London: Croom Helm, 1980, ch.7; W. E. Butler, Soviet law, op. cit. ch.3.

11. Berman, op. cit., p.168.

12. Johnson, op. cit., p.103.

13. Makepeace, op. cit., p.298.

14. K. Simis, USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society, London, Melbourne, Toronto: Dent and sons, 1982, pp.13-19.

15. A. B. Chakovskii, 'Otvét chitatel'yu', 1968, No.13, p.13.

## IX. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

In his study of Soviet law H. J. Berman establishes a link between Soviet conceptions of crime and the Russian Orthodox notion of the 'corporate character of sin'. The whole community shares in the guilt of the criminal, who is perceived as a victim of society or of his own human weaknesses. Sympathy for the criminal, however, does not necessarily lead to the belief that the crime should not be harshly punished. As a matter of fact, Berman remarks,:

... many Russians waver between a religious sentiment of leniency toward the offender and a political acceptance of the necessity to sacrifice his interests to those of the state.<sup>1</sup>

It could be argued that this ambivalent attitude towards criminal behaviour is reflected in the discrepancy between, on the one hand, the progressive, albeit simplistic, Soviet theory of the social origin of crime, and, on the other, the harsh justice exercised by Soviet courts. The American journalist, George Feifer, who had been impressed, during his study of Soviet law, by the emphasis placed in Soviet legal literature on 'the need to re-educate and reform, rather than to punish, criminals', was taken aback by Soviet judges' readiness to pass on extremely stiff sentences for minor offences.<sup>2</sup> Soviet judges tend to punish not so much the criminal act itself as the offender's failure to be a good member of the community. For instance, theft of state property is considered as being extremely reprehensible,

whatever the value of the goods stolen, because it reveals the offender's disregard for the collective. It is interesting to note that this concern for what Berman calls the 'subjectivity of crime' is not regarded as a unique feature of Soviet justice, but rather as part and parcel of the Russian legal tradition.<sup>3</sup>

There was a time when the official theory, that Man being a product of society criminal behaviour had its roots in negative social circumstances created by capitalism or 'vestiges of bourgeois society', was used to justify leniency in the courts. During the first years of Soviet power, offenders whose crimes were attributed, say, to poverty would get away with relatively light sentences.<sup>4</sup> But the high level of lawlessness caused by the social and political upheavals following the Revolution as well as, a few years later, the drastic regimentation of Soviet society under Stalin resulted in a tragic reversal of the trend. In the sixties, although the Soviet system had been cleansed of Stalin's most outrageous violations of legality and more liberal criminal codes were being introduced, Soviet justice remained harsh, as though Soviet judges could not forgive offenders for disproving the still upheld official theory that crime is bound to disappear in a socialist society. This is, indeed, the impression that Soviet judges seem to have made on Feifer when he observed the work of the courts in Moscow at the beginning of the sixties:

'We are building communism', they  
[judges] seem to say (and often they do

say it), 'and if you are not willing to help after we have given you every opportunity to do so, then you are not worth our effort and we are not willing to help you'.<sup>5</sup>

In the sixties Soviet justice was marked by a rather puzzling contradiction which echoes Berman's observation. On the one hand, it was based on a theory promoting the, after all, enlightened view that social and economic factors must be taken into account if a good understanding of criminal behaviour is to be reached; on the other, Soviet judicial practice appeared 'unreasonably harsh to many observers both in the West and in the Soviet Union. The debates publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta (approximately 60,000 words) examine both the theory and the practice.

#### 1. The Controversy over the Development of Criminology

The development of Soviet criminology was virtually halted in the mid-thirties. (The last national statistics on crime published under Stalin date from 1935.)<sup>6</sup> Neither of the two tendencies which coexisted during the twenties succeeded in resisting the onslaught of official dogmas. The biopsychological theories came under attack with the end of the NEP, while the 'sociologists', who had had their hour of glory when denouncing the biological determinism of their opponents, eventually became redundant in the eyes of the official ideologists. Indeed, the painfully simplistic conception of crime as a product of capitalism meant that it was no longer necessary to research into the causes of

criminal behaviour as they were expected to disappear gradually with the building of socialism.<sup>7</sup>

Like many of their colleagues in other disciplines, criminologists and lawyers had to wait until the mid-fifties before they could resume genuine research. And after twenty years of intellectual hibernation, the profession once again found itself divided between 'sociologists' and 'biologists'.

The socio-economic approach has been championed, in particular, by the high-powered All-Union Institute for the Study of Crime and the Elaboration of Measures of Crime Prevention, which was created in 1963 and placed under the jurisdiction of the Procurator General of the USSR.<sup>8</sup> In an interview published by Literaturnaya gazeta, the deputy-director of the Institute, G. I. Kocharov, emphasizes that the mission of his research centre is to investigate the reasons why crime has not ceased to exist in socialist society. He then summarizes his researchers' latest findings, which have revealed that alcoholism and low levels of education are the most important factors contributing to the unabated presence of crime in the country. (3/4 of crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol; 50% of murderers are people who did not continue with their studies after primary school.)<sup>9</sup>

This type of research is in line with the authorities' acknowledgement of the need for a more realistic picture of Soviet society and the subsequent revival of sociology. Even though there is no indication in the article that the

'vestiges-of-the-past' theory might have been discarded (it is easy enough to claim that alcoholism and low levels of education are the legacy of pre-Revolutionary Russia), it is nevertheless clearly argued that measures must be taken in order to rid socialist society of such negative social phenomena, and this requires scientific research as well as a public debate. Indeed, judging by Kocharov's contribution, the Institute seems to favour a move towards more 'glasnost' on crime in the media although journalists are warned against the temptation of sensationalism and that of using the press as a means of establishing the guilt of the accused before the investigators and the courts had time to do their work - probably an allusion to the role of the press in Stalin's campaigns against 'enemies of the people'.<sup>10</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the sociological approach should have succeeded in reasserting itself as the only way to further the development of criminology in the eyes of the academic establishment. After all, it rests on the postulate, never relinquished by Soviet ideologists, that all criminal behaviour is socially determined. In the sixties, however, some researchers were eager to revive the biopsychological school of thought which flourished in the twenties. In his study of Soviet criminal law, R. W. Makepeace points out that, while these 'distinctly biologically oriented theories', such as those of I. S. Noi, enjoyed little publicity, they received a great deal of criticism.<sup>11</sup> It is all the more interesting to note that Literaturnaya gazeta

did publicize trends which did not exclude biology from the study of criminal behaviour.

The controversy amongst criminologists, publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta, between the 'sociologists' and the 'biologists' is part of the more general debate on the need for an 'Institute of Man', which has already been examined in chapter 4.<sup>12</sup> Literaturnaya gazeta chose to familiarize its readers with the issue by asking law specialists to comment upon a letter from a reader who expressed the view that the explanation for any crime is to be found in human nature rather than social circumstances. The first contributor, Dr V. Kudryavtsev, supports the sociological approach, vigorously disagreeing that criminals are born criminals, an idea which he sees as summing up the biological argument, and reiterates that only social factors can account for criminal behaviour. As for psychopaths, who make up a tiny minority amongst criminals, they must receive medical treatment rather than be punished. Nevertheless, Kudryavtsev welcomes the idea of using the expertise of psychologists at various stages of the criminal procedure as well as in law-enforcement agencies, arguing that the cause of any crime has its roots in the interaction between the individual's personality and his environment, the psychological make up of the criminal being, itself, a product of the social system.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, professors N. Struchkov and B. Utevskii advocate a close cooperation between psychology and biology. While agreeing with Kudryavtsev that no one is born



a criminal, thus indirectly pointing to the simplistic interpretation the 'sociologists' tend to make of their theories, they criticize him for underestimating the role of the personality in assessing the causes of criminal behaviour and for failing to recognize that an individual's personality is the product of both 'the social and the biological'. Criminologists must research into biological, physiological, psychological phenomena and their interaction with social factors.<sup>14</sup>

Four months 'later three letters from academics which refer to the above-mentioned exchange of views were published in the Discussion Club section of the paper. The biopsychological school of thought is supported by only one contributor, Ya. Iorish from the Philosophy Department of the Main Library for Social Sciences, who argues that criminology should include research not only in psychology, but also in biology, genetics, physiology, biochemistry and anthropology. Sexual offences and the infliction of torture are given as examples of crimes which cannot be explained solely in social terms.<sup>15</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta was careful to print two other letters which back Kudryavtsev's argument, thus counterbalancing Iorish's outspoken defence of the anti-establishment camp. Yet the editors conclude this highly significant, albeit brief, debate by coming out on the side of those who call for further research into the biopsychological aspects of crime.

The position adopted by Literaturnaya gazeta might appear somewhat disconcerting to the Western reader, wary of the biological argument in the assessment of criminal behaviour. Marxists are not alone in arguing that this line of thought can sustain the most reactionary theories on crime. However, the paper's stand in the controversy must be evaluated within the framework of the more general debate on the need to break away from official dogmas which reduce Man to a social being. As pointed out in chapter 4, Literaturnaya gazeta unambiguously chose to promote the liberal view that a pluridisciplinary approach is required in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of human nature.

While backing the 'biologists', Literaturnaya gazeta nevertheless does not forsake the 'sociologists', whose work is publicized, for example, in the interview of the deputy-director of the Institute of Criminology attached to the Procuracy of the USSR. Nonetheless, in their conclusion to the debate the editors argue, firstly, that sociological research cannot, by itself, provide adequate answers; secondly, that science needs to incorporate a wide range of viewpoints, 'otherwise stagnation (zastoi) sets in.' The paper's advocacy of academic pluralism echoes Iorish's thinly veiled allusion to the effect that Soviet science has not yet shaken off the yoke of Stalinism. Those who describe any attempt to involve biologists in criminological research as a 'concession to bourgeois ideology', Iorish argues, work on the depressingly simplistic assumption that 'if non-Marxists

say "yes", then we should say "no"', and, he goes further to assert that:

It is people guided by such a motto who, in their times, rejected the theory of relativity, classical genetics, cybernetics etc...<sup>16</sup>

The relatively brief debate on the biopsychological approach in criminology did not recur at a later stage during the years 67-71. On the other hand, the pro-psychology argument was frequently propounded in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta throughout this period. This might be explained by the fact that both schools of thought emphasized the need for criminologists and members of the legal profession to resort to the expertise of psychologists, the 'sociologists' justifying their stand by arguing that the psychological is never free of the social. This does not necessarily imply that psychologists were made welcome in the courts. In fact, judging by several pieces published by Literaturnaya gazeta, most investigators, procurators and judges seemed to have remained reluctant to involve them in the criminal procedure.

Not all the authors who reprove the courts for not using the expertise of psychologists share exactly the same concerns. Some are primarily anxious that a better understanding of criminal behaviour be achieved so that adequate preventive measures can be taken. For example, V. Eliseeva, a journalist who has been called upon to exercise the duties of a people's assessor, is amazed by the great

number of 'meaningless' violations of the law, often committed under the influence of alcohol, which, she argues, cannot be accounted for by unfavourable socio-economic circumstances. She wonders how it can be explained, for instance, that teenagers steal items that they do not even 'need', thus indirectly pointing to the inadequacies of theories defining needs in purely socio-economic terms. Eliseeva is also alarmed by the judges' failure to discriminate between offenders according to their personal histories, and, in case of youngsters, to trace back the causes of their behaviour to a deficient moral education, in particular, within the family.<sup>17</sup>

The call for a greater use of psychological expertise to gain some real understanding of criminal behaviour is not necessarily motivated by the wish to see more leniency in the courts. For instance, Eliseeva deplores the fact that the two lads who killed the dog that they had stolen have been punished for the theft, but not for their cruelty to the animal. Professor K. Platonov, a researcher in criminal psychology, believes that the sentence need not be stiffer, but rather must be adapted to the personality of the offender in order to be more effective.<sup>18</sup>

Other contributors express the view that the failure to use the expertise of psychologists frequently leads to miscarriages of justice. The most general complaint is that prosecutors and judges tend to present the accused as a villain devoid of any redeeming features, thus unfairly

influencing the outcome of the trial. A more specific criticism is that, as little attention is given to the psychological state of the offender at the moment of the crime, it is often wrongly assumed that the crime was, indeed, premeditated. M. Yakubovich, the head of the Department of Criminal Law at the High School attached to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, maintains that a great number of miscarriages of justice originate from the reluctance of judges to consider whether the right to self-defence might apply, and for this reason he, too, argues that psychologists must be allowed, or even invited, to testify, precisely in order to help the court clarify the circumstances of the crime.<sup>19</sup>

It is also pointed out by some contributors that miscarriages of justice can happen because no attempt has been made to assess the psychological state of witnesses. Indeed, witnesses are not necessarily reliable sources of information whether because they wish to remain loyal to their friends or, more simply, because they might have wrongly interpreted the situation and jumped to conclusions.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the pro-psychology lobby includes those who seek to encourage a more compassionate attitude towards offenders both in the court and in society at large. In a 'Discussion club' page devoted to the question of crime N. Chetunova suggests that it is not always easy to draw the line between right and wrong, and that offenders are not all

bad.<sup>21</sup> Her article is followed by a reader's letter telling the story of a man driven to crime by a series of personal tragedies for which other members of his family must be held responsible.<sup>22</sup> The third contribution is an interview, conducted by Yu. Pavlov and V. Perel'man, in which the writer and ex-criminal Akhto Levi makes a distinction between 'professional criminals', who are a minority, and the majority of those who just happen to be easily influenced. While not condoning the latter's weakness of character, Levi understands why in corrective labour camps youngsters, in particular, should be more impressed by 'courageous' hard-core criminals always prepared to take risks, rather than by the usually badly trained and often corrupt so-called 'educators'.<sup>23</sup>

The well-known defence lawyer Arkadii Vaksberg, a regular contributor to Literaturnaya gazeta, establishes a clear connection between the need to show more compassion and the desire to attain higher standards of justice. Referring to the case of a jealous husband who attempted to strangle his wife, Vaksberg argues that the judge gave him an unreasonably stiff sentence because what had driven this 'perhaps a little dull yet loving' husband into committing an 'unforgivable' crime, in particular the behaviour of his 'selfish' wife, had been completely overlooked by the court. He then offers the following comment:

It is a pity that our courts should call on the help of psychological expertise so rarely, so timidly, so unwillingly, in spite of the possibilities offered by

the law... If only psychologists were more regular guests, or rather advisers, in our courts, a much more accurate, clear and convincing interpretation would be placed on the motives of the actions which have led to dramatic and intricate conflicts.<sup>24</sup>

This article triggered off a strong reaction from a female reader, who, in a later issue, was given the opportunity to argue against Vaksberg that jealousy ought not be regarded as an acceptable extenuating circumstance.<sup>25</sup> But the article is also related to a more general controversy on the harshness of the law, which Vaksberg greatly helped to sustain, as will become apparent in the analysis of the debate.

## 2. Vaksberg's Plea for Softer Sentences

It is commonly recognized that the criminal codes adopted under Khrushchev testified to a significant degree of liberalization in the Soviet legal system. Punishments for minor crimes such as, for example, petty thefts, were greatly reduced and certain offences, in particular abortion and absenteeism at work, were decriminalized. At the same time Western scholars have been anxious to point out that the legislation introduced in the early sixties stipulated extremely harsh sentences for certain categories of offences. Some forms of 'hooliganism' were to be treated more severely, recidivists were to be given heavier sentences, the death penalty became applicable to a wide variety of crimes, including those of an economic nature. One should also

mention the blatantly undemocratic anti-parasite laws, which have been used , in particular, against dissidents.<sup>26</sup>

Although the debate on the harshness of the law publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta fails to examine the appropriateness of specific sentences, it nevertheless highlights the limitations of the process of liberalization by questioning the inconsistent and often authoritarian interpretation by the courts of the existing legislation.

The debate was triggered by Arkadii Vaksberg's article, printed in the already mentioned Discussion Club page devoted to legal issues.<sup>27</sup> Vaksberg compares the case of a man who received a three-year suspended sentence for stabbing a woman with that of a teenager sentenced to two years' imprisonment for fighting with a friend from whom he tried to steal twenty kopecks. Outraged by the leniency of the former sentence as much as by the unjustified severity of the latter, Vaksberg interestingly argues that these unacceptable discrepancies stem from the courts' tendency to make a judgement on the defendant rather than on the particular crime which has been committed, thus criticizing the 'subjectivism' of Soviet courts which has always astonished Western observers.<sup>28</sup>

Vaksberg also reproves judges for systematically 'inflating' sentences because they fear that light ones might be repealed, yet expect harsh ones to be reduced by the Courts of Appeal, which, unfortunately, does not always happen.



Vaksberg's pieces, and this one is no exception, are permeated by a feeling of compassion, compassion, perhaps, for the clients for whom he has failed to secure a fairer sentence and whose lives have been destroyed by undeserved prison sentences. After their release from corrective labour camps, ex-offenders are no longer entitled to their residence permit and do not find work easily. They often come back embittered and are likely to remain alienated members of society. In the end, Vaksberg concludes, no one gains from an unreasonably harsh implementation of the law.<sup>29</sup>

The subversiveness of Vaksberg's liberal stand appears all the more evident when compared with the replies to his article, which are both very critical of him, though to differing degrees. In the first contribution, L. Mironov, deputy chairman of the Moscow Town Court, systematically refutes all the arguments put forward by Vaksberg, taking it upon himself, it would seem, to defend the honour of his profession. Indignant at Vaksberg's portrayal of judges as heartless bureaucrats who give little thought to the implications of their decisions for the future of defendants, Mironov casts doubt on the defence lawyer's intellectual honesty, remarking that he conveniently overlooked the fact that the supposedly harmless youngster badly beat up the other lad and violently resisted the police. More importantly, Mironov reiterates his support for the very theory which Vaksberg rejects, i.e., that the extent of the theft, in this case a mere twenty kopeck coin, is not

necessarily a determining factor in establishing the nature or length of the sentence, the degree of 'immorality' revealed by the offender being equally significant, if not more so. Mironov's contribution does not add anything new to the debate, yet shows that the notion that a criminal court ought to be a 'court of morals' is deeply ingrained in Soviet judicial practice.<sup>30</sup> Mironov also reminds us of the low status of Soviet defence lawyers as he irreverently dismisses Vaksberg's claim by lamely concluding that only a barrister can entertain such thoughts.<sup>31</sup>

The author of the second reply, Dr G. Anashkin, takes a more moderate view, playing the part of referee between the two professions. On the one hand, he deems Vaksberg's sweeping criticism of judges unfounded, declares Soviet legislation 'one of the most humane in the world', approves of the heavier sentences recently introduced to punish certain forms of 'hooliganism' and wishes that other offences, such as, for example, theft of material and production of defective goods in industry, were more severely and more systematically punished by the law. On the other hand, Anashkin calls for a strengthening of the role of the defence, agrees that unnecessarily stiff sentences are counterproductive and believes that, as a rule, a move towards softer punishments should be encouraged. 'The closer socialism comes to communism', he argues, 'the less coercion needs to be exercised'. Anashkin also favours the search for types of punishment other than imprisonment, an idea which

Vaksberg, too, will defend later on. However, rather than a whole-hearted defence of Vaksberg, Anashkin's piece remains a cautious summary of conventional ideas, namely the assumption that socialism creates the right conditions for a reduction in crime coupled with a pragmatic acknowledgement of the need to use the law to protect the system, even though it is tinged with a little liberalism.<sup>32</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta generously publicized the conservative argument. Not only is Vaksberg's article subjected to harsh criticism on two consecutive occasions, the paper also seems anxious to emphasize that the authoritarian approach to crime and punishment might well enjoy a great deal of popularity amongst the population. A couple of months after the publication of Anashkin's article it is brought to the attention of readers that many of them have written in to argue in favour of heavier sentences. A letter from a certain I. Kalmanovich is printed with an introduction from the editors stressing that it is typical of many contributions they have received on the subject. Kalmanovich guilelessly calls upon the official dogma to justify his support for an extremely repressive policy towards offenders. As in the socialist society, he predictably argues, 'objective reasons' for crime do not exist, criminals should not expect to be treated with indulgence; it is right, he continues, that the sentence should be determined according to the degree of danger that the crime or criminal presents to society rather than

according to the extent of the violation of the law (i.e. a theft is a theft whether ten kopecks or millions of roubles have been stolen); juvenile delinquents must not be spared and capital punishment ought to be extended to a wider range of crimes; prison sentences should never be reduced as criminals will understand that 'the laws of the socialist state must not be violated' only if they go through the 'bitter experience of imprisonment and forced labour'.<sup>33</sup>

It is always difficult to evaluate the relevance of readers' contributions to a debate. Given the censorship under which newspapers had to operate at the time, letters to the editor cannot be regarded as a reliable source of information on public opinion. What's more Soviet researchers themselves have frequently pointed out that letter writers are mainly middle-aged and elderly men and, therefore, unrepresentative of the whole readership.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand the authoritarianism that permeates readers' responses to Vaksberg's liberal propositions must not be dismissed too hastily. After all, opinion polls carried out in the West, for example on the question of capital punishment, usually reveal a higher degree of conservatism among the general public than, in particular, among its parliamentary representatives. It should be noted, however, that not all letters published by Literaturnaya gazeta show the high degree of relentless vindictiveness that characterizes the piece sent by Kalmanovich. Several readers seem particularly worried by the frequent occurrence of petty thefts in

factories and farms which remain unpunished as managers tend to turn a blind eye. The advocacy of legal repressive measures to solve what is primarily an economic problem might not appear particularly shrewd, yet denotes a genuine concern for the economic chaos that these readers have witnessed in their places of work.<sup>35</sup>

Whether Literaturnaya gazeta publicized these letters because they really represented a major trend in Soviet public opinion or because it wanted to be seen as giving the conservative camp a fair deal, the paper clearly indicated where it stood in the controversy by using the letters as a means to respond, albeit indirectly, to Vaksberg's critics in the legal profession. Kalmanovich's letter is, indeed, followed by a 2,000 word reply from a professor of law, B. Nikiforov, who is given the opportunity to expound his liberal views again four months later when asked to comment upon another batch of readers' letters on the subject. In both articles Nikiforov openly expresses his indignation at the bloodthirstiness of many letter writers, who are quick to demand the criminal's head and unhesitatingly declare defence lawyers' judgement untrustworthy on the grounds that they are more interested in getting their clients off the hook than in promoting justice. Like Vaksberg, Nikiforov believes that the extent of the violation of the law, as well as the circumstances which have led the offenders to commit the crime, ought to weigh heavily in the decision of the judge as to the length and nature of the sentence. Repeating the

argument that cruelty breeds cruelty, Nikiforov refers to the findings of sociologists to show that not only have heavy sentences not helped to achieve a decrease in the crime rate, but, on the contrary, they have resulted in a greater percentage of recidivism.<sup>36</sup>

Another proof of Literaturnaya gazeta's inclination to support the liberal camp on this issue is that Vaksberg remained a regular contributor and was given other opportunities to put forward his progressive views on the question of crime and punishment. In an article published in 1969 the outspoken defence lawyer calls once more for a softer approach in the courts, arguing that the ultimate goal of the judicial system ought not be to punish, but rather to facilitate the offender's reinstatement in society. Encouraged by the recent introduction of measures allowing the early release of prisoners for good behaviour, Vaksberg advocates more diversified forms of punishment which would significantly reduce the prison population. To give political strength and legitimacy to his argument, Vaksberg mentions the case of a 'brother country', Bulgaria, where, apparently, two thirds of offenders do not serve prison sentences. Instead a variety of probation schemes have been set up with the result that the incidence of recidivism has considerably decreased.<sup>37</sup>

A few weeks later, in a lengthy account of a court case, Vaksberg continues his crusade for a more compassionate attitude to offenders for the good of society as a whole. He

tells the story of a successful and respectable surgeon who has turned out to be the perpetrator of a murder that took place thirty years ago. Praising, in passing, the procurator who, for all these years, has left the case unsolved rather than look for a scapegoat (a chilling allusion to all the miscarriages of justice which must have taken place because procurators are pressured to fulfill their 'success quotas'), Vaksberg expresses his disagreement with those who pleaded, albeit unsuccessfully, for a twenty-six-year prison sentence. Obviously, his argument is not meant for this particular case only:

What do we judge and punish lawbreakers for? After all, the one and only aim of society is not to revenge itself or to return evil for evil, but to make these people abide by the rules of society and expiate their fault with honest work. But surely prison is not the only place where people can be reformed, surely it is not only behind prison walls that this goal can be achieved. Surely our society, with its moral principles and great educational possibilities, is capable of exerting a beneficial influence on an individual who has seriously wronged it, yet has not lost the ability to punish himself and soberly evaluate his own behaviour.<sup>38</sup>

Vaksberg was not alone in advocating a more humane and constructive way of dealing with crime. W. E. Butler notes that in the sixties there was 'evidence of a sceptical disenchantment with deprivation of freedom in a correctional-labour institution as a punishment', and as a result of research studies carried out in the late sixties and early seventies alternative types of punishment were introduced.<sup>39</sup>

In the debate examined here, Vaksberg has been efficiently seconded by Nikiforov and not all his arguments have been rejected by the more moderate Anashkin. Furthermore an account of a round table involving writers, journalists and the USSR Minister for the Maintenance of Public Order, N. A. Shchelokovyi, published by Literaturnaya gazeta in 1967, indicates that some of the views put forward by Vaksberg were supported by a number of high-ranking officials. Many of the Minister's statements are, indeed, very similar to those of Nikiforov and Vaksberg in both content and form. (The point is not the punishment itself, but that the offender should become a 'fully-fledged' member of society; cruelty breeds cruelty, therefore heavy sentences and harsh treatment in prison are counterproductive etc...)40 Yet none of them defends these liberal views with quite the same eloquence as Vaksberg, whose passionate plea, occasionally tinged with a little idealism, makes the short-sighted and self-righteous authoritarianism of Soviet courts all the more tangible.41

### 3. Perel'man on the Unfair Treatment of Ex-Convicts

In their short study of Literaturnaya gazeta Dzirkals, Gustafson and Johnson examine two 'cases of controversy' that are meant to illustrate the ambiguous nature of the paper. The first one, the cynical campaign orchestrated against Solzhenitsyn apparently with the help of the Central Committee and/or the KGB, reveals its darker side. The second case referred to as 'the scandal over the passport system',



which was prompted by Viktor Perel'man's outspoken piece on the predicament of ex-convicts, shows that Literaturnaya gazeta was also capable of non-conformity.<sup>42</sup>

Perel'man was not the first contributor to tackle this issue in the pages of Literaturnaya gazeta. In 1967, in the course of the already mentioned round table with N. A. Shchelokovyi, the USSR Minister for the Maintenance of Public Order, a writer from Leningrad, Scryabin, suggested that passport restrictions be abolished and that ex-convicts be allowed to go back where they used to live and work.<sup>43</sup> In 1968 Grigorii Medynskii, in a long article published in the 'Various Themes' section of the paper, deplored the harsh treatment of offenders in correctional-labour camps as well as the obstacles contrived by the authorities after their release.<sup>44</sup>

Medynskii's criticism is initially couched in rather abstract terms as he places the issue within the framework of a more general debate on the relation between the state and the individual, calling upon Karl Marx, who is alleged to have remarked that 'the state cannot lightly push aside one of its members'. Medynskii argues that potential conflicts between collective and individual interests should be settled in the most harmonious and balanced way possible - an argument strikingly reminiscent of the previously examined debates on collectivism. Individuals, Medynskii continues, are indisputably responsible for their actions before society, yet society too must face up to its responsibilities

and ensure that individuals find themselves in an environment conducive to the development of their 'creative power' and 'intellectual and moral potential'.

Medynskii's article goes on to become more specifically critical. In particular, like many supporters of a softer line on punishment, Medynskii launches an unrestrained attack against the staff in correctional-labour camps. He describes them as being often 'idle', 'indifferent' to the fate of their charges, 'without any educational expertise' and 'completely unaware of what their job entails', thus turning offenders into 'stupid brutes' who are bound to resume a life of crime after their release.

The passport system is identified as another major reason for the high degree of recidivism. Ex-convicts cannot easily find work or obtain a resident permit with the result that they are forced back into a life of vagrancy and crime. Medynskii mentions the case of a former offender who has been helped in his efforts to rebuild his life by the city executive council of his town, yet stresses that this is the exception rather than the norm. He describes the attitude adopted by most local authorities when faced with this situation in these terms:

It is easier without him [the ex-convict], so they throw him from one place to the other like a football, as long as it is far away from them so they won't have any problems. But they cover it up by hiding behind state power and claiming to act in the name of the people...<sup>45</sup>

Perel'man's article, published a couple of years later, concentrates entirely on the residence permit issue. His article was partly the outcome of his meeting with the ex-convict turned writer Akhto Levi, whom he had already interviewed with Yu. Pavlov in 1968 a few weeks after the publication of Levi's 'Notes of a Grey Wolf' in the journal Moskva.<sup>46</sup> As it happens, Levi's next book deals with the difficulties encountered by ex-prisoners on their discharge from the camps, the major one being that they are not allowed to go back to their native towns and, therefore, cannot easily resume a normal family life. Neither can they easily obtain a residence permit from an other local authority as managers are reluctant to take them on, either because of their police record or their irregular situation. Most of them find it difficult, often impossible, to break the vicious circle: no work no residence permit, no residence permit no work.

Perel'man's attack is, indeed, hard-hitting. He does not attempt to soften the blow with abstractions. More importantly, he argues that the issue must not be treated solely in moral terms. The point is not to lament local authorities' lack of courage and irresponsibility; rather it is a case of introducing drastic changes to the passport system. The law must be changed:

Is it [the law] not at variance with the very spirit of our legislation, which is based on the idea that the punishment must be in strict accordance with the severity of the crime? But if someone who has already drunk from the 'bitter

cup' is still frustrated in his rights, doesn't it show that the 'chastising sword of the law' continues to be in action even when it should be back in its sheath?<sup>47</sup>

Perel'man, too, pays tribute to individuals who, like the defence lawyer S. M. Bunina, bravely challenge normal practice and go out of their way to help ex-convicts. More importantly, however, Perel'man argues that an entirely new policy, rather than 'philanthropy', is needed to redress the situation, and he urges 'the MVD, local councils, trade unions and the Komsomol' to get together in order to decide:

... on the best way to organize a wide network of public support for those who are firmly determined to follow the strait and narrow.<sup>48</sup>

Perel'man's open criticism of government policy is all the more striking because it is reinforced by three letters from MVD officials who all unreservedly side with the journalist and call for a change in the passport laws. I. Telepnev, head of the City Department of Internal Affairs at Pereslav'-Zalesskii, in the suburbs of Moscow, is well aware of the problem as many former prisoners, not allowed to live in the capital, try to settle there. It is Telepnev's experience that either they move on because they cannot accept the idea of living in unfamiliar surroundings, or they stay put yet remain estranged from the local community and often end up committing another crime. D. Kiselev, deputy head of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Moscow City Executive Committee, believes that most ex-prisoners would

find it much easier to rebuild their lives if only they were allowed to go back where they used to live and work, and that correctional-labour camps ought to develop links with industry in order to help ex-offenders find jobs after their release. All these arguments are reiterated and supported by Professor M. Eropkin, deputy head of the Administrative Service of the Militia, yet another high-ranking MVD official.<sup>49</sup> It is the second time in these debates that Literaturnaya gazeta has shown evidence of a reformist tendency within the MVD. As pointed out earlier, N. A. Shchelokovyi, the USSR Minister for the Maintenance of Public Order, was critical of the harsh treatment of offenders in correctional-labour camps.<sup>50</sup>

The open and strong support of the MVD for Perel'man's article to some extent undermines its subversive effect, as it could be seen as merely promoting a policy that has already been endorsed by a powerful ministry. On the other hand, the article failed to lead to a debate on the passport system, which seems to indicate that other sections of the political establishment might have disapproved of it. In fact Literaturnaya gazeta practically gave up discussing the fate of ex-offenders altogether. During the period under examination here, only one more contributor dealt with the issue in an extremely subdued manner, making vague comments about society's regrettable hostility towards those who hold a police record.<sup>51</sup>

The scenario which Dzirkals, Gustafson and Johnson reconstituted on the basis of Perel'man's account confirms this analysis. It would seem that the MVD, where some research had been conducted showing that passport restrictions were indeed a major contributing factor in the high rate of recidivism, encouraged Literaturnaya gazeta to publish the article, happily providing it with the necessary visa. But the relevant department of the CC, which had not been consulted, saw the article as an attempt to 'sow distrust of the Soviet constitution and its laws'. All the participants in the drama were called to order by the CC, including Chakovskii. Yet no one was sacked, not even Perel'man, possibly because, as he himself suggested, the minister concerned defended his article before the Party.<sup>52</sup>

It is not clear why Literaturnaya gazeta did not clear the article with the CC before publication. Was it simply a mistake on the part of the editors, an error of judgement, or a conscious attempt to bypass the authority of the Party? The last interpretation seems plausible. It is possible that Literaturnaya gazeta hoped to benefit from the support of an important ministry and intended to use the conflicts existing between different centres of power to promote the ideas of the more progressive section of the political establishment. The incident also shows the paper's readiness to fall back into line when needed, which might explain the growing disenchantment of a readership whose hopes have been raised, yet not fulfilled.

#### 4. Conclusion

The debates on crime and punishment paint a bleak picture of Soviet justice. The courts are frequently depicted as being authoritarian, unfair and unconcerned about their role in replenishing a large prison population. The debate on criminology suggests that judicial practice lags behind theoretical developments. Not only have the courts remained impervious to any approach advocating a pluridisciplinary study of crime, their work seems to have been little influenced by the more conventional sociological school of thought. They tend to pass harsh sentences with scant regard for social, psychological and other factors that might constitute a basis for extenuating circumstances. Their unsophisticated perception of criminal behaviour leads at best to unacceptable discrepancies between the seriousness of the crime and the nature of the punishment, at worst to actual miscarriages of justice.

Some of the controversies are reminiscent of the law and order debates which regularly take place in Western democracies, with liberals emphasizing rehabilitation over punishment and hard-liners fighting any drift towards an increase in non-custodial sentences. But it could be argued that rather than being a strength, this similarity is evidence of the paper's failure to clearly establish the special significance of such a debate in a society where the judiciary is dominated by a repressive political party. Although the frequently criticized harshness of punitive

sanctions is a constant reminder to the Western reader of Soviet society's highly repressive nature, the issues are nevertheless raised within a limited framework of discussion. For example, the legacy of Stalinism, which the reforms of the fifties and sixties failed to eradicate completely, is not systematically analysed; nor are the reasons for the 'subjectivism' of the courts. Their tendency to judge the degree of the offender's 'immorality' rather than the seriousness of the crime may account for some of their inconsistencies, yet the picture remains incomplete as no mention is made, for instance, of the pressures under which the courts operate as a result of their dependence on the Party. Another striking example of the paper's cautious line are the remarks on the brutal treatment of convicts, which by comparison with accounts published in dissident literature appear absurdly timid.

It is, however, to the paper's credit that it continued to publicize liberal views on such controversial issues in spite of the increasingly repressive climate. It is clear from the debates examined in this chapter that at the time the idea of a tough justice system was prevailing in the courts and was enjoying some degree of popularity among the legal profession as well as, apparently, the general public. Since then history has shown that in the seventies even reform-minded top officials in governing bodies, such as the MVD, were unable to stop the criminal code from becoming increasingly repressive.<sup>53</sup> Although Literaturnaya gazeta was



powerless to influence the decision-making process, it was nevertheless instrumental in maintaining a debate pertaining to the repressive nature of Soviet society, which was to take a dramatic turn during the first years of the Gorbachev government.

The harshness of the law, the brutality of the correctional-labour camps and the injustice of the passport restrictions are denounced on humanitarian, social and, to some extent, political grounds. The general message is that a policy resulting in the formation of a large prison population, which is bound to produce a sizeable group of bitter and socially marginalized individuals, is detrimental to the whole of society. The most outspoken contributors frequently suggest that those behind bars do not have a monopoly on wickedness and that their judges and gaolers would do well to re-examine their motives, thus implicitly presenting the inflexibility of the justice system as the reflection of a Manichean vision of society fostered by years of Stalinist propaganda.

Finally, the debates on the harshness of the law, and especially those on passport restrictions, politicize the issue of the relationship between the collective and the individual. Certain contributions contain a bold criticism of the excessive power that the Soviet state wields over its citizens. This is an issue which lies at the centre of the debate on the inadequacies of the criminal procedure examined in the next chapter.

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## X. THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

The criminal procedure underwent drastic changes in the fifties. The principles which had transformed Soviet law into an instrument of terror under Stalin were publicly denounced and forsaken. Confessions were no longer to be treated as evidence of guilt. The notion of guilt by association included in the 1934 criminal code, which, in particular, enabled the courts to send relatives of 'enemies of the people' into exile or labour camps, became invalid along with the analogy principle, which was open to all manner of abuse. (According to this doctrine a person who had committed an act deemed 'socially dangerous' by the court, yet not expressly forbidden by law could be sentenced under a law proscribing an analogous act.) The Ministry of Internal Affairs had to abolish its infamous 'special boards' (osobyie soveshchaniya), commonly known as 'troiki', and the secret police was no longer allowed to investigate crimes under its own rules.

From then on all criminal investigations were to be supervised by the procuracy. The drastically enhanced status of the Soviet procuracy, whose duties were clearly defined for the first time in a decree issued on 24 May 1955, was in many ways perceived as a safeguard against misuse of power by the secret police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>1</sup> The new procuracy, often compared to its ancestor established under Peter the Great, when the procurator was

regarded as 'the eyes and the ears of the sovereign', has been entrusted with two main responsibilities. Firstly, it is its duty to ensure that the law be observed by all citizens and all organizations. Secondly, when it is satisfied that the law has indeed been violated its responsibility is to prosecute while making sure that the court remains within the bounds of the law.<sup>2</sup>

Investigators, who are expected to be impartial officials, work under the control of the procuracy, unlike, for instance, the French 'juge d'instruction' who is subject to the control of the courts. It is the procuracy which decides on the basis of the investigator's report whether the case should be quashed or referred to the courts. Should it become convinced, in the course or at the end of the preliminary investigation, that the accused is innocent, it is its duty to drop the proceedings, as it must see that the truth prevails. On the other hand by transferring the case to the court the procuracy clearly indicates that it deems the accused guilty. The powers of the investigators and the procuracy are all the greater because, although the rights of the defence have been strengthened, as a rule defence lawyers are still prevented from participating at the investigative stage.<sup>3</sup>

Not only are judges well aware that the procurator firmly believes in the guilt of the accused (otherwise he or she would not have prosecuted), they conduct the trial on the basis of the preliminary investigation endorsed by the

very same procurator/prosecutor. What's more, unlike what happens in the 'adversary' system of Anglo-Saxon law Soviet judges do not act as mere 'referees' between two contending sides in the presence of a jury; they play a leading part in the trial examining the evidence, questioning witnesses and finally passing sentences with the assistance of two lay judges, the people's assessors.<sup>4</sup> Witnesses do not appear for the benefit of the prosecution or the defence. Like all the other participants in the trial, including the defence lawyer, they are expected to assist the court in finding the Truth.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1967 and 1971 Literaturnaya gazeta allocated a substantial amount of space to the debates discussing the relatively new criminal procedure (approximately 80,000 words). Most aspects of the proceedings are criticized, and the impartiality of investigators and judges is called into question. Ways of reinforcing citizens' rights before the law are discussed in two different debates. One concentrates on the need to increase the participation of lay judges. The other deals with the issue of the defence, thereby questioning the presently existing relationship between the investigator, the procuracy and the court, as well as the ability of the procurator to be both prosecutor and guardian of the law.

#### 1. Investigators and Judges under Suspicion

A number of contributions contain harsh criticisms

levelled at incompetent investigators whose shoddy work has or might have resulted in miscarriages of justice. Although specific cases are examined, it is often broadly hinted that they must not be regarded as unusual occurrences. For instance, K. Yurev relates the case of two boys accused by a girlfriend of having stolen her watch. The boys maintained that they were innocent, yet the young investigator in charge of the investigation charged them with theft. A brief mention of the high position held by the girl's father could be interpreted as a discreetly suggested explanation for the investigator's readiness to believe her story, which was uncorroborated by any hard evidence. In the end, the boys were not prosecuted thanks to the intervention of the procurator supervising the investigation, who felt that the girl's testimony had to be challenged. The title of the article, 'An everyday, ordinary case...', may as well point to the banality of the offence as to the frequency of inadequately conducted investigations. The lesson drawn by Yurev, though, is clearly intended for the benefit of the whole profession. The miscarriage of justice was averted, he concludes, because the procurator 'made use of his right to doubt until the end'.<sup>6</sup>

Other articles suggest that not all procurators can be relied upon to drop the proceedings when the preliminary investigation fails to produce evidence. In this respect Bogat's long piece, ironically headed 'Truth, truth...', is all the more interesting because it uncharacteristically



deals with a major case. The article relates the story of the manager and senior engineers of a large firm in Leningrad, charged with large-scale bribery, report-padding and other financial irregularities, endemic in a planned economy. Their arrest was decided on the basis of an investigation involving the interrogation of no fewer than two hundred persons, yet the court deemed the charges unsubstantiated. Not only is Bogat indignant at those in charge of the investigation, who hastily ordered the arrest of these people before they had any evidence of their guilt, he is equally disgusted by the procuracy's decision to press charges for minor crimes, which practically any plant manager could be found guilty of, solely in order to save face. The manager was sentenced to twenty months' imprisonment for using funds unlawfully, in particular to pay teams of shabashniki.<sup>7</sup>

Ya. S. Kiselev, introduced by Literaturnaya gazeta as one of the most famous Soviet defence lawyers whose professional activity dates back to the twenties, relates several cases emphasizing the frequent unreliability of the preliminary investigation.<sup>8</sup> In an article published in 1967 Kiselev firstly recalls the years just after the Revolution with unconcealed nostalgia. It was a time when each trial was a 'school of morality', and the courts, fair and humane, saw to it that destitute defendants charged with theft would in future receive financial help. He speaks of high professional standards among judges, who betrayed no

preconceived ideas about defendants during trials. Surprisingly enough, however, what seems to have begun as a thinly veiled criticism of contemporary courts turns out to be mostly an attack against those in charge of preliminary investigations whose bad work, Kiselev argues, makes it very hard for judges to administer justice. The courts can operate correctly, he continues, only if the evidence gathered in the course of the preliminary investigation is 'thoroughly' and 'impartially' checked.<sup>9</sup>

Judges who have succeeded in redressing the errors made by investigators, sometimes with the help of the defence, are the positive heroes in Kiselev's stories. The defence lawyer relates how on one occasion he revealed to the judge that the defendant, charged with burglary, could not have been a participant in the crime because he was with a woman friend at the time. His client had refrained from using this perfect alibi as he did not want his wife to get wind of his infidelity. The judge, who dared to disbelieve the conclusions of the preliminary investigation and declared the defendant innocent on the basis of this new piece of evidence, is reported to have remarked to Kiselev that this particular investigator was known for his biased enquiries. In a later account of yet another case Kiselev praises a judge for establishing that the defendant had stolen some valuable objects with the charitable aim of helping a girlfriend, a fact that the investigator had failed to uncover or consciously chosen to ignore.<sup>10</sup>

Kiselev's harsh criticisms of preliminary investigations are greatly undermined by his tendency to exonerate judges. By simply presenting them as frequent victims of incompetent and unscrupulous investigators, he fails to question the system which, according to him, makes them so dependent on the investigative agencies.

On the other hand, other contributors make it their duty to expose the responsibility of judges in miscarriages of justice, fiercely criticizing them for not questioning the investigators' conclusions endorsed by the procuracy. Among them is the author of a satirical piece, Yan. Polishchuk, who tells the story of a restaurant manager in the health resort of Minvody in the Stavropol' region, wrongly declared guilty of misappropriation of funds by a judge in Pyatigorsk. This is how Polishchuk describes the way in which the case was handled by the court:

... this trial was quick, just and benevolent. 'Quick' in the sense that the judge V. Kantemirov raced through the conclusions of the investigators, galloped through Lisitska's inconsistent testimonies... 'Just' inasmuch as the judge V. Kantemirov, in an ungentlemanly way deprived the defence lawyer of the right to put forward counter-arguments and the defendant of the right to familiarize himself with the report of the inquest. 'Benevolent' in the sense that the judge did not even try to use all the articles made available to him by the law, but instead goodheartedly limited himself to those which guaranteed the accused six long years' imprisonment.<sup>11</sup>

The defendant has since been cleared by the procuracy in the neighbouring town of Essentuki. Yet Polishchuk deplores that no action has been taken against the investigators whose inquest led to the miscarriage of justice, or the judge V. Kantemirov, who, the author bitterly remarks, has shown no sign of feeling guilty about his role in the affair.

In 1969 Literaturnaya gazeta gave a great deal of publicity to a court case reported and analysed by Olga Chaikovskaya. It was published in two parts in two consecutive issues of the paper, each article being approximately 2,000 words long.<sup>12</sup> Like Polishchuk, Chaikovskaya virulently attacks untrustworthy investigators and biased judges, but her articles are particularly interesting because they highlight the survival of investigative and judiciary practices that were supposed to have been eradicated by the reforms introduced in the fifties and sixties.

In the first part of her account Chaikovskaya lists a whole series of irregularities in the preliminary investigation. The two boys charged with the murder of a fifteen-year-old girl, were questioned without the presence of a lawyer, whereas the new law clearly stipulates that defence counsels must be allowed to participate in the preliminary investigation when persons under the age of eighteen are charged with serious crimes.<sup>13</sup> That they were questioned a second time in the presence of teachers did

nothing to reassure Chaikovskaya, neither did the fact that they shared a prison cell with an adult, which is strictly forbidden by the law. Finally, it turns out that the two lads were charged solely on the basis of their confessions. The procuracy did not deem it necessary to drop the proceedings against them in spite of a lack of hard evidence.

Chaikovskaya is particularly concerned that confessions should continue to be used as a means to establish the defendant's guilt. In spite of the law a large section of the legal profession seems to hold the view that confessions can now be relied upon and treated as evidence because they no longer are torture-induced. Ironically, this way of thinking has been encouraged by the new emphasis on legality and the improved work of the investigative agencies. Chaikovskaya does not conceal her amazement at the naivety (or is it complacency?) of professional lawyers, conveniently oblivious of the various kinds of pressure which may lead defendants to accuse themselves of crimes they have not committed. Referring back to the particular murder case that she is covering for the paper, Chaikovskaya points out that the two lads confessed at a time when they felt lonely and frightened, the more so as they had been deprived of their right to a defence counsel and advised against arguing with the investigator by the adult with whom they shared a prison cell. Switching again from the particular to the general, the journalist underlines the

great discrepancy between the progress achieved by Soviet legal theory and the comparatively slow improvement of judiciary practice, as shown in this extract:

It is precisely to ensure that there will not be any intentional or unintentional pressures, any conscious or unconscious desire to extract or barter for confessions, that the law stipulates that confessions are not evidence in themselves. For legal experts, I repeat, this is crystal-clear... In theory that is... But in practice?<sup>14</sup>

In the second part of her account Chaikovskaya focuses on the trial. Scathing criticisms are levelled at the presiding judge who, apparently from the very beginning, made no secret of the fact that she thought the defendants guilty. All the observations made by Chaikovskaya combine to expose the court's total lack of objectivity. The judge is reported to have addressed witnesses with various degrees of sympathy, favouring those whose testimonies reinforced the case of the prosecution. She harshly treated a young girl who retracted her statement that incriminated the defendants, the girl arguing that after five long hours of questioning she had been too exhausted to read the statement before signing it. According to Chaikovskaya the judge was not disposed to believe her as it would have meant challenging some of the methods used by the investigator.<sup>15</sup>

The journalist also criticizes the judge for playing the tape with the recording of the confessions in court, and for making no attempt to contain the elderly schoolteacher

who kept shouting unsubstantiated accusations at the two defendants, who, in the end, got ten years each. This appalling performance is contrasted with that of the judge at the second trial, a calm, softly-spoken man who showed great respect for all witnesses, called the vindictive schoolteacher to order, and declared the defendants not guilty, their confessions having remained uncorroborated by any hard evidence. (Obviously more concerned about the cause of justice than that of women, Chaikovskaya also suggests that men might make better judges than women as they are less emotional.)<sup>16</sup>

A few months later Chaikovskaya was given the opportunity to express her views on the work of the courts in general. In a lengthy article which takes up a whole page of the paper, she relentlessly attacks the courts, obviously anxious to dissipate the last illusions of sceptical readers who might still cling to the belief that the 'bad judge' of her story was untypical.<sup>17</sup>

Chaikovskaya examines the issue from two different angles. First of all, she exposes the inadequate conditions in which judges often have to work. Not only do the frequently dilapidated, dirty, cold and cramped courts' buildings pitifully fail to reflect the 'grandeur of justice', they do not allow for proceedings to take place according to the law. As a result of a shortage of rooms witnesses are commonly kept waiting in the corridors where they can communicate between themselves. Some cases are

virtually heard in camera, when the only available room is the judge's office, which can only accommodate a small number of people. Buildings are overcrowded and judges overworked.

In the second part of the article Chaikovskaya focuses on the unacceptable behaviour of judges in courts, reiterating several points that she had already included in her report of the court case. Judges, she claims, should refrain from influencing the development of the trial, which they often do by making it obvious that they believe the defendant guilty before cross-examining has even begun. Judges, she continues, should refrain from intimidating defendants, which they often do by adopting a suspicious or sarcastic attitude towards them. In his book on Soviet justice Berman argues that even though the phrase 'presumption of innocence' does not figure in the criminal codes introduced in the early sixties, 'all that American jurists generally mean by that phrase is spelled out in Soviet law.'<sup>18</sup> Judging by Chaikovskaya's articles the notion still remained unfamiliar to many a judge in the Soviet Union by the beginning of the seventies. The journalist even recalls a judge asking a witness, as it happened the father of the accused, to prove the defendant's innocence.<sup>19</sup>

Other contributors are equally critical of the way in which trials are conducted. Only a few weeks after Chaikovskaya's article Literaturnaya gazeta published an



interview with a judge in Moscow who does not hesitate to criticize a number of court practices, in particular the tendency of some of her colleagues to monopolize the floor rather than carefully listen to what defendants and witnesses have to say.<sup>20</sup> Not surprisingly Arkadii Vaksberg also finds fault with the manner in which judges handle witnesses, often ignoring the testimony of those with a police record, or refusing to summon additional witnesses suggested by the defence. Echoing Chaikovskaya's criticism of judges unable or unwilling to contain emotional outbursts in their courts, Vaksberg also remarks that some sessions are, indeed, reminiscent of 'show trials'.<sup>21</sup>

Chaikovskaya's piece, however, remains the most comprehensive attack on the whole profession of judges. Yet it falls short of analysing the whys and wherefores of such a situation. The only procedural change that she recommends is that the indictment should not be read by the judge, but rather by the procurator/prosecutor. She also urges judges to reject pressure from local dignitaries, a brave, if only too brief, allusion to the dependence of the courts on the Party apparatus, which, according to the émigré Soviet lawyer Konstantin Simis is 'completely institutionalized'.<sup>22</sup>

This last issue is nowhere tackled in the paper. Yet ways of limiting the power of judges are discussed, first of all in the debate on people's assessors, which will be examined next.

## 2. People's Assessors Versus Judges

People's assessors (narodnye zasedateli) are elected for two and a half years and called upon to sit in court for a maximum period of two weeks per year so that their relatively brief periods of absence from work are not prejudicial to the country's economic activity. As the concept of lay judges is presented as stemming from the socialist belief that the masses are entitled to participate in the running of society, they are not expected to have a specialist knowledge of the law. Therefore few assessors have legal training, yet, as a rule, they take part in elementary law courses and seminars, usually run by 'people's universities'.<sup>23</sup> To quote the American journalist G. Feifer, people's assessors are 'the cream of workers', elected by the trade unions at their factories and offices, or possibly, albeit less frequently, by general meetings at their places of residence.<sup>24</sup>

The court consists of one professional judge and two people's assessors who each have an equal vote with the judge. It may, therefore, appear rather odd that all the contributors to the debate should call for an increase in the number of assessors as the existing system already makes it possible for them to outvote the professional judge. The problem lies in the fact that most assessors do not use the influence that the system grants them. Butler remarks that they are 'known to outvote the judge' 'on occasion'.<sup>25</sup> Konstantin Simis claims that they are completely overwhelmed

by the authority of the professional judge and that in the course of his long career in the Soviet Union he 'only twice came across cases where the assessors attempted to challenge a verdict which they considered unjust'.<sup>26</sup> G. Feifer, who went to observe Soviet courts with an open mind, describes people's assessors in these terms:

... the vast majority sit quietly and awkwardly in their places as if embarrassed by their superfluity. Overwhelmed by the knowledge, experience and professionalism of the judge, they look on passively, like spectators with good seats...<sup>27</sup>

None of the contributors who took part in the debate publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta in 1967 (approximately 8,000 words) would object to this description of people's assessors' behaviour in the courts. Not all of them, however, share identical views as to the means of achieving what is commonly referred to as 'the democratization of the courts'.

The discussion was triggered off by the outspoken columnist N. Chetunova.<sup>28</sup> Not a jurist herself, Chetunova seems to have taken it upon herself to promote the views of the reform-minded section of the legal profession. Doubting that, in spite of increasing educational standards among the population, assessors can ever be expected to know the law as well as professional judges, Chetunova believes that their self-confidence, independence of judgement and sense of civic responsibility would be greatly enhanced should they be greater in numbers. Making no secret of her wish to

see the powers of judges drastically curtailed, Chetunova also argues, like F. Burlatskii whose article in the review Kommunist she frequently quotes, that the verdict of guilty or not guilty should be delivered by the assessors rather than the judge, who could nevertheless retain the responsibility of determining the nature of the sentence.<sup>29</sup>

Two weeks later Literaturnaya gazeta published a second lengthy article, this time from a professor of law, who, when not backing Chetunova's arguments, advocates even more radical changes.<sup>30</sup> Professor R. Rakhunov agrees that a greater number of assessors would improve the performance of the court as a group of, say, eight to twelve individuals is less likely to let itself be intimidated by a professional judge. He also shares the view that the verdict should be delivered by the assessors without the participation of the judge. To give political weight to these proposals, Rakhunov astutely argues that the present system, in fact, originates from the civil war period when a quick judiciary process was needed to overcome class enemies. Its continuation cannot, therefore, be justified at this stage in the building of communism when every effort must be made to 'develop socialist democracy' and 'broaden the subjective rights of citizens and the freedoms of the individual'. The time has come, Rakhunov continues, to apply the Leninist principle of people's involvement in the running of society more systematically and to revive the spirit of the first years of Soviet power when verdicts were delivered by rather large

groups of between six and twelve people's assessors, with judges playing only a consultative role.

Rakhunov's treatment of judges is ruthless. While not going so far as to expose their dependence on extra-judiciary powers, he nevertheless overtly criticizes them for failing to resist pressures from within the legal system and for avoiding passing sentences which they suspect would displease higher courts; hence the need to take power away from them and enhance that of lay judges. Rakhunov believes that judges' rights and powers should be curtailed to a greater extent even than that suggested by Chetunova. According to him, not only should assessors deliver the verdict, it also ought to be their job to determine the sentence, albeit with the assistance of the professional judge. Furthermore, judges should be made to abide by the law and call assessors in turn instead of choosing them as they frequently do. Finally, unlike Chetunova, Rakhunov sees little point in a local experiment and demands that such changes be introduced swiftly and throughout the country.<sup>31</sup>

The authors of the letters published in the Discussion Club section as part of the debate on people's assessors also agree that the number of lay judges should be increased. The three contributors, a judge, a defence lawyer and a people's assessor, seem equally anxious to expose the heavy workload of the courts, further hampered by an intolerable amount of red tape. They all agree that the constantly high number of cases waiting for trial makes it

practically impossible for assessors, in particular, to study each file as well as should be expected. In the light of this widely recognized reality, both the judge and the defence lawyer suggest that assessors be asked to participate in criminal cases only, leaving administrative ones in the care of professional judges.<sup>32</sup>

However relevant these criticisms and proposals may be, the letters fail to comment upon what really is the fundamental issue, i.e. the division of powers between professional and lay judges. After all, Professor I. Perlov also, whose extremely cautious reply to Chetunova and Rakhunov closes the debate, readily concedes that a team of four, or even, perhaps, six people's assessors would not feel so overwhelmed by the knowledge and expertise of professional judges. On the other hand, he fiercely argues against any measures aimed at allocating different roles to assessors and judges, thus reducing the power of professional judges in the courts. Resuming the ideological argument, Perlov reproves Rakhunov for wanting nothing less than a 'bourgeois' jury system based on the assumption that the judge defends the interests of the state, while the jury (prisyazhnye zasedateli) represents those of society. A loyal supporter of the official dogma, Perlov tritely argues that such a conflict of interests between state and society cannot possibly exist in a socialist country.<sup>33</sup>

The defence lawyer Ya. Kiselev looks at the issue from a different angle. Agreeing with all the other participants in the debate that for the courts to become 'genuinely democratic' the number of assessors need to be increased, he does not believe, however, that this reform alone would provide an adequate safeguard against miscarriages of justice. Whereas in his other articles Kiselev handles judges with kid gloves, putting much of the blame for unfair trials on investigators, here he argues that the source of many miscarriages of justice lies in the failure of the courts to secure an 'equality of the sides', i.e. a just balance between the prosecution and the defence. Complaining that judges and procurators often gang up against the defence, - a grievance shared by many contributors -, Kiselev calls for the removal of judges who do not conceal their bias against defendants and their lawyers.<sup>34</sup> It could be argued that Kiselev's contribution yet again lacks in imagination and boldness, as he basically proposes to maintain the existing system, hoping that punitive measures will deter judges from behaving unprofessionally. Shying away from questioning the balance of power between people's assessors and professional judges, he nevertheless makes the extremely important point that a democratic reform of the courts also implies a radically new approach to the role of the defence, an issue which was comprehensively discussed in Literaturnaya gazeta during the years 1967-71.

### 3. The Case for the Defence

Zhores Medvedev remarked that when studying for his law degree at Moscow University, Gorbachev 'almost certainly chose to do his apprenticeship in a procurator's office'. The historian sees, indeed, no reason why the future general secretary of the CPSU should have been attracted to the advocacy where jobs 'are usually filled by non-Party members...', considered not quite trustworthy and therefore unsuitable to work in the procuracy or for the KGB'. In the Soviet Union, Medvedev succinctly concludes, 'defence lawyers are the pariahs of the legal profession'.<sup>35</sup>

Defence lawyers have always been regarded with suspicion by Soviet power. By 1917 the profession had earned the respect of many for its frequent attacks in the courts on the political establishment of Tsarist Russia. In his book on Vyshinsky A. Vaksberg remarks that a great number of barristers assumed functions in the administrations and governing bodies that emerged from the February Revolution.<sup>36</sup> Yet the profession was reproved by others, in particular the Bolsheviks, for its 'bourgeois liberalism'. Perceived by the new rulers as being more concerned with defending the interests of the individual than those of society as a whole, the Advokatura (the Bar) was dissolved shortly after the Revolution, on 24 November 1917. After a brief period when any citizen enjoying civil rights could act as a defence counsel, the profession was brought back into existence with the formation of advocates' collectives



working under the supervision of State and Party organizations.<sup>37</sup> Far from recovering its pre-Revolutionary prestige, however, it was further driven into submission by an increasingly repressive legal system dominated by the sinister figure of Vishinsky, who considered the principle of equality between prosecution and defence as a vestige of the bourgeois society.<sup>38</sup>

Although Vyshinsky's theories were officially discredited in the late fifties, the profession was to find it difficult to rise again after four decades of relentless oppression. G. Feifer remembers Soviet law students complaining, in the early sixties when the new codes had already been introduced, about defence lawyers 'confusing the issue' and 'wasting [their] time'.<sup>39</sup> It could be argued, of course, that the half-baked reforms of the late fifties could hardly have been expected to produce a radical change of attitude towards the defence. The new laws do stipulate that the accused is now entitled to a defence lawyer in all cases, yet the rights of the defence have remained limited. Unless the defendant is a minor charged with a serious crime, defence lawyers may attend the interrogation of their clients only if the investigator allows it.<sup>40</sup> Their participation in trials is also highly restricted as they may question witnesses only through the judge.<sup>41</sup>

Feifer argues that in the fifties representation at the investigation was the most debated issue amongst Soviet

jurists, and that those in favour of full representation from the moment of arrest were, for a time, thought to be winning the argument.<sup>42</sup> Complete de-Stalinization, however, was not to occur so rapidly, and the lengthy discussion organized by Literaturnaya gazeta (approximately 30,000 words), mainly during 1970, is clearly a continuation of that of the fifties. The paper gave the debate a high profile, publicizing a wide range of opinions and encouraging a lively exchange of views. The contributions revolve around two main interrelated issues; firstly, the nature of the relationship between defence lawyer and client; secondly, the balance of power between the defence and the prosecution.

The debate sadly shows that twelve years after the reforms of 1958 that were supposed to have reinforced the status of the defence, a significant section of both the general public and the legal profession still failed to recognize the vital role of the defence in the judiciary process. It is the year 1970, yet in his contribution, which opens the debate formally initiated three months earlier by the editors, judge G. Z. Anashkin deems it necessary to explain at great length that the socialist justice system cannot be fair without defence counsels playing their part. 'Just remember the events of the past', Anashkin argues. 'The crudest violations of socialist legality occurred in cases examined without the participation of the defence'. That Anashkin should feel the need to reassert these simple

truths is indicative of the high degree of resistance to genuine changes offered by the procuracy and the courts.<sup>43</sup>

Curiously enough, however, opponents of a strong defence are not to be found amongst investigators, procurators and judges only. Several contributors bitterly complain that many defence lawyers fail in their responsibilities and shame the profession by simply siding with the prosecution against their clients. In an earlier contribution which foreshadows the debate to come, A. Vaksberg questions the morality of the still prevalent view that lawyers, convinced of their clients' guilt, must plead guilty even when the defendants claim their innocence. At a later stage in the increasingly heated debate, the famous defence lawyer makes his feelings perfectly clear:

Of course I do not have the right to accuse [my client]; it is not my job; it is not my duty. When I see, for example, a defence lawyer demanding, in the name of the victim, that the defendant should be severely punished for his crime, I am ashamed of my colleague.<sup>44</sup>

The vast majority of the participants in the debate agree with Vaksberg that the defence has no business adding to the case of the prosecution. Lawyers' commitment is to their clients; it is their moral and professional duty to *defend* them within the framework of the law. Anashkin and A. D. Boikov, a senior researcher at a criminology institute, are particularly sickened by defence lawyers who have advised clients to plead guilty, leaving it to the judge to

prove their innocence. Professor M. S. Strogovich, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, vehemently attacks lawyers 'afraid of entering into an argument with the investigator and the procurator and of disagreeing with the court'.<sup>45</sup> At the round table formally closing the debate, Chetunova refers to similar cases of 'collaboration' between prosecution and defence, concluding that the authority of the advokatura will be enhanced only if lawyers themselves adhere to high moral and professional standards ('printsipial'nost').<sup>46</sup>

While urging defence counsels to redeem their profession by playing an active part in cleansing it of the aberrations of the past, these authors are equally anxious to expose the hostility faced by courageous lawyers, already committed to 'strengthening the defence' in deed as much as in word. Anashkin deplores <sup>the fact</sup> that lawyers who dare to disagree with the court should still be badly thought of, and claims that many judges, procurators, investigators and police officers continue to regard defence counsels as redundant. The negative image attached to the defence is succinctly summed up by one of the participants in the round table:

... there still exists the rather widespread view that the defence lawyer only hinders the establishment of the truth, that he 'shields' the criminal, seeking to save him from the punishment that he deserves.<sup>47</sup>

This 'rather widespread view' is shared by only two contributors whose articles seem to have been used by

Literaturnaya gazeta to rekindle the debate, or even perhaps to take it a step further. In a short letter following Boikov's article, a defence counsel from L'vov is filled with indignation to think that a lawyer who does not believe in his client's innocence can plead not-guilty, which, in his view, amounts to obstructing the court in its effort to establish the truth.<sup>48</sup> A few weeks later an article by Dr S. Berezovskaya provides the rationale behind the argument that defence lawyers must not necessarily defend their clients. Berezovskaya criticizes all the previously published articles for presenting defence lawyers and procurators as belonging to opposite camps. She claims to have been particularly outraged by Vaksberg, who seems to believe that only defence lawyers are committed to the idea of justice. In the socialist system, Berezovskaya conventionally argues, all the participants in a trial must cooperate in order to establish the truth, - a notion, already well established before Vyshinsky's reign, which originates from the theory of class-based justice advocated by the Bolsheviks. Consequently Berezovskaya reduces the role of the defence lawyer to that of a watchdog whose job it is to make sure that the court does not overlook any extenuating or, incredible as it may sound, aggravating circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

The effect of Berezovskaya's dogmatic piece was to re-focus the debate on the fundamental issue, namely, the role of the procuracy. In what is one of the most radical contributions, A. Giganov, a jurist with thirty years of

experience in an investigation office attached to the procuracy, fiercely rejects the proposition which lies at the centre of Berezovskaya's argument, i.e., that the procurator, who is both prosecutor and guardian of the law, can be regarded as an impartial participant in the criminal procedure. Like many Western observers, Giganov argues that the same person cannot be both accuser and defender, and that the procurator is bound to be convinced of the defendant's guilt before the trial has even begun, otherwise the case would have been dropped in the course or at the end of the investigation supervised by the procuracy.<sup>50</sup> Giganov finally suggests that the prosecution be the responsibility of the investigator rather than the procurator.<sup>51</sup>

Giganov's provocative piece did not go unnoticed. Two weeks later Literaturnaya gazeta published a lengthy article by Professor I. Perlov, whose cautious position is somewhat reminiscent of his conservative contribution to the debate on people's assessors.<sup>52</sup> On the one hand, Perlov sharply criticizes Berezovskaya for disregarding the need to maintain a strict 'division of functions between the court, the procuracy and the advocacy'. Truth, Perlov declares, more often than not emerges from the 'opposition between prosecution and defence'. On the other hand, he vehemently dissociates himself from Giganov's claim that, given the nature of the system, the procurator is bound to be ill-disposed towards the defendant from the beginning of the

trial. On the contrary, Perlov continues, the procurator's role as guardian of the law, far from being at variance with that of prosecutor, ensures a high level of objectivity on the part of the procuracy all through the trial.

What's more Perlov's ideas on the role of the defence are ambiguous. He eagerly stresses the positive role played by the defence in 'strengthening socialist legality'. Praising, in passing, the well-known defence lawyers Kiselev and Vaksberg for their enlightening accounts frequently published in Literaturnaya gazeta, he claims to be of the opinion that defence counsels must defend their clients in all cases. Yet he challenges the view put forward, in particular, by Strogovich that lawyers should never be seen to side with the prosecution, even when they think that their clients are guilty. In such a situation, Perlov suspiciously argues, the job of the defence is to highlight their clients' extenuating circumstances. This line of action, he comments, cannot be regarded as siding with the prosecution as long as defendants are kept informed of their lawyers' intentions and retain the right to change defence counsels.<sup>53</sup>

However relevant and thought-provoking Giganov's criticism of the Soviet procuracy's dual role may be, his case arguably contains a major flaw, which both Perlov and the next participant in the debate, M. Malyarov, were quick to expose. Giganov, an investigator by profession, proposes, indeed, to curtail the power of the procuracy by handing

the prosecution over to the investigator. This idea is enthusiastically supported by V. Statkus, Deputy Head of the Investigative Board of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, who would like to see his ministry responsible for both the investigation and the prosecution, with the procuracy retaining only its role of supervision (nadzor).<sup>54</sup> Perlov objects that such a reform would inevitably result in the investigative agencies losing their objectivity. Malyarov, introduced by Literaturnaya gazeta as a famous jurist working for the Procuracy of the USSR and author of numerous law text-books, warns that a concentration of investigative and prosecution powers in the same hands is highly undemocratic. After all, the status of the procuracy was enhanced in the late fifties precisely in order to keep a check on the investigative agencies and stop them from running amok as they had often done, though to various degrees, since the beginning of Soviet power.<sup>55</sup>

A. Trusov, the last contributor to the debate before the round table, disagrees with Perlov and Malyarov as well as with Giganov. He believes that the investigative agencies should be neither answerable to the procuracy nor endowed with too great powers including those of the prosecution. Instead, Trusov believes that the courts ought to be responsible for supervising the investigation, with the procurator remaining as state prosecutor, - a system based on the division of powers between the investigation, the



prosecution and the court, which, Trusov claims, would have enjoyed the support of Lenin.<sup>56</sup>

However, Trusov unambiguously supports Giganov when it comes to exposing the disproportionate powers of the prosecution in relation to the defence and the procuracy's virtually inevitable bias against the defendant. As a rule, Trusov argues, for reasons already explained by Giganov, the procuracy deems the accused guilty from the beginning of the trial. Such practice, Trusov continues, is condoned, if not encouraged by jurists like Berezovskaya, whose argument is based on:

... a failure to discriminate between the notions of 'accused' and 'criminal' ('presumption of guilt'), which leads to pit the defendant's right to a defence against the 'interests of the state'. (It is logical to grant the right to a defence and a defence lawyer to the accused, i.e. to someone who is *possibly* a criminal; but it is hardly in the interests of the state to grant these rights to someone who is already thought to be a criminal.)<sup>57</sup>

Trusov claims to have noticed the same tendency to use the terms 'accused' (obvinyaemyi) and 'criminal' (prestupnik) indiscriminately, as if they were synonymous, in Malyarov's article. Judging by the account of the round table, which gathered more than two hundred defence lawyers from Moscow, this confusion was widespread amongst the legal profession. One of the jurists participating in the discussion is reported to have quoted an extract from a decree issued by the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the

RSFSR recommending that court sessions take place 'where the offence has been committed, or at the place of work or residence of the *guilty party*'.<sup>58</sup> 'Of course', the jurist remarks, 'it is a mere slip of the tongue, yet a very eloquent one'.<sup>59</sup>

Trusov goes one step further by analysing the issue in the context of a discussion on citizens' rights. The confusion between the terms 'accused' and 'criminal', he argues, means that in fact the concept of presumption of innocence is not applied. Being labelled a criminal, the defendant ceases to be regarded as a citizen and is stripped of his citizens' rights, including the right to a proper defence, hence the undemocratic, yet widely accepted notion that the defence lawyer is a mere helper in the process of administering justice within a system heavily dominated by the prosecution, which is also responsible for supervising the investigation. Trusov, who, it is important to stress, was given the last word in the debate by Literaturnaya gazeta, clearly establishes that a full recognition of the rights of the defence, and consequently of citizens' rights, necessitates a radical reform of the procuracy.

That the work of the defence is greatly hampered by the omnipotence of the procuracy becomes painfully clear when contributors discuss the need to 'broaden the rights of the defence'. In an article which foreshadows the debate to come, Vaksberg complains that defence lawyers cannot do

their job properly because, unlike procurators, they are not allowed to question witnesses before the trial. 'And why not?', Vaksberg retorts. 'After all, we [the prosecution and the defence] are supposed to be equal parties. And we do have the same aim, i.e. to establish the truth'. To those who object that defence lawyers might influence witnesses, Vaksberg irreverently replies that it should not be assumed that procurators do not.<sup>60</sup>

Vaksberg is backed by a couple of fellow lawyers who also hold the view that they should have access to witnesses. M. Blagovolina, in particular, formulates the problem in terms that help to understand the ambiguous position of many other contributors. Why shouldn't we be allowed to meet witnesses, she wonders. After all, there is no law against it, or are we to understand that what is not explicitly allowed is in fact forbidden?<sup>61</sup>

And, indeed, a number of contributors, like, for example, Anashkin, Boikov, Strogovich and Perlov, proceed from the assumption that in the present system defence lawyers do have access to witnesses if they wish. Consequently they blame the lawyers themselves for not exercising the rights they already have, although they occasionally concede that some obstacles are put in their way. Boikov, for instance, reproaches the courts for favouring the prosecution and Strogovich acknowledges that the failure of defence lawyers to exercise their rights to

the full is partly caused by 'a last vestige of mistrust' towards them.<sup>62</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, that the suggestions made by these authors as to ways of broadening the rights of the defence even further show that their perceptions of the present system differ quite significantly. Anashkin, for example, thinks that defence lawyers can intervene only when the investigation supervised by the procuracy has been completed, and proposes that they should be allowed to act as soon as the charges are brought. On the other hand, Perlov believes that this is already the case and, therefore, the way to broaden the rights of the defence is to authorize lawyers to represent their clients from the moment the police enquiry begins. The confusion seems to stem from the fact that whereas defence lawyers *may* be allowed to intervene while the preliminary investigation is taking place, they *must* be allowed to do so once it has been completed.<sup>63</sup> Obviously Perlov has more faith in the procuracy's willingness to facilitate the work of the defence than Anashkin.<sup>64</sup>

It often seems that a dialogue of the deaf is taking place between these frustrated defence lawyers and jurists who stubbornly maintain that defence lawyers already enjoy the right to meet witnesses before the trial. It could be argued that the latter are indirectly urging the procuracy and the courts to make room for the defence in the spirit of the new legislation. Yet their failure to question the

impartiality of the procuracy is worrying. Furthermore many of them are firmly opposed to the idea that defence lawyers should be allowed to conduct their own investigation. Boikov, for example, argues that only an investigation supervised by the procuracy can be objective. Anashkin approves of the defence conducting its own investigation only in Western societies where the justice system is dominated by the bourgeoisie. On the whole, these authors regard increased participation of the defence in the preliminary investigation as an additional safeguard against any abuse of power by the investigative agencies, yet they still want the procuracy to remain the main player.

Ten weeks after the round table Literaturnaya gazeta published an article by A. Sukharev, first Deputy-Minister of Justice of the USSR, the title of which 'Problems of the Advokatura - Outcome of the Discussion' indicates that it must be read as the official reply to the debate. Sukharev's arguments are remarkably similar to those put forward by authors like Anashkin and Boikov. He agrees that the rights of the defence need to be broadened (measures are being taken to this effect), that the role of defence lawyers is to defend their clients and that it is, indeed, regrettable that defence counsels do not always command the respect they deserve. However, Sukharev continues, it is right that defence lawyers should not be allowed to gather or check the evidence, this work being best done by the investigative agencies under the supervision of the procuracy.<sup>65</sup>

It would be incorrect to argue that the official reply is in no way different from even the most conservative contributions previously examined. The deputy-minister has an unpleasant tendency to hammer home the point that the advokatura's professionalism leaves much to be desired and that many defence lawyers are 'unscrupulous' individuals. More importantly, the role of the defence in the investigation has been discussed with more subtlety by a number of authors. Strogovich, in particular, insists that while defence lawyers cannot be allowed to conduct an investigation, they must exercise their right to gather information and present evidence.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, the reply from the Ministry of Justice confirms the suspicion that those who call for the need 'to broaden the rights of the defence' are not necessarily committed to achieving a right balance between prosecution and defence. The two hundred or so defence lawyers who met for the round table organized by Literaturnaya gazeta had probably been more impressed by the contributions which question the dual role of the procuracy as prosecution and guardian of the law, and its seemingly unwavering resolve to restrict the scope of the defence. That day the general feeling was, indeed, that whether or not they already had many rights in theory, they certainly did not have them in practice, as most of the time the procuracy refuses to call additional witnesses or take any course of action suggested by the defence.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

In an article published in The Guardian in 1986 which examines recent developments in the legal profession, the British journalist Martin Walker refers to a 'remarkable and laudatory' review of a posthumously published book by Professor M. S. Strogovich.<sup>68</sup> Walker deems 'fascinating' a statement made by Strogovich in his book to the effect that most serious miscarriages of justice stem from the practice of building up the accusation on the defendant's confession.<sup>69</sup> Fascinating as it may be for a relatively ill-informed Western audience inclined to regard the pre-glasnost Soviet press as hopelessly muzzled, it is unlikely that Soviet readers familiar with the debates publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta in the sixties and seventies could have been particularly impressed by the statement itself, although its endorsement by the USSR Ministry of Justice was indeed indicative of a change of mood amongst policy-makers.

The similarities between the debates examined in this chapter and those that took place in the first years of the Gorbachev administration are certainly striking. Recent studies have shown that under Gorbachev reform-minded jurists called for the need to remove the preliminary investigation from the procuracy, to eliminate the 'prosecution bias' of the courts, to increase the number of people's assessors, to raise the status of the defence and

ensure that the principle of presumption of innocence is applied.<sup>70</sup> All this sounds terribly familiar.

The recurrence of the issues testifies as much to the political and social stagnation of the Brezhnev era as to the efforts made by Literaturnaya gazeta to keep the debate open during this period. On the other hand the comparison with the eighties helps to identify the limitations of the debates publicized in the years 67-71. Two essential issues were never tackled, one of them being the dependence of the judicial system on the Party and State authorities, which the émigré lawyer Konstantin Simis so vividly exposed in his book, USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society, in particular in the chapter called 'Justice for Sale'. The issue ceased to be taboo with the advent of glasnost'. For example, in 1988 the chairman of the USSR Supreme Court advocated the introduction of a law aimed at penalizing any attempt to interfere in the work of the courts, and in the above-mentioned article from The Guardian M. Walker refers to a contribution published by Literaturnaya gazeta in 1986, in which A. Vaksberg denounces the perverse influence of the Party on the justice system.<sup>71</sup>

Secondly, apart from Chakovskii's spiteful article savagely attacking the dissident writers Ginzburg, Galanskov, Dobrovol'skii and Laskova, no mention is made of the political trials.<sup>72</sup> This silence is ironic in a way because the human rights movement of the sixties and seventies, which began in 1965 with the political



mobilization provoked by the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, was very legalistic in its approach. The White Book, a samizdat publication that circulated during the Sinyavsky-Daniel affair, included the transcript of the trial and articles denouncing the illegal methods used by the investigative agencies. Likewise each issue of the Chronicle of Currents Events, which first appeared on 30 April 1968, began with reports on political trials. Unlike their predecessors, the victims of political repression under Brezhnev did not ask for clemency. They demanded that legality be observed, thus questioning the competence of the courts.<sup>73</sup>

It is interesting to note, however, that although political trials were not discussed in Literaturnaya gazeta, there are obvious similarities between the legalistic demands of the human rights activists voiced in illegal literature and the concerns expressed in the organ of the very orthodox Writers' Union. Both types of publications, for instance, denounce the discrepancy between the reformist spirit of the legislation introduced in the late fifties and the lingering undemocratic practices that were established in the thirties. In December 1965 Yuli Daniel's wife, Larisa Bogoraz wrote a letter to the procurator general, later published in a samizdat publication, in which she protests against the illegal methods employed during the investigation:

The senior investigator, Lieutenant Gregory P. Kantov, asserted in conversation with me that my husband was guilty and would be punished.... This

prejudicial attitude during the process of investigation forces me to doubt the objectivity of the means used to conduct the trial.... The investigator made indirect threats: If I did not behave myself ('You understand what I mean,' he said, although I had no idea what he was talking about), there would be unpleasant consequences for me at my job... I demand that standards of legality and humanity be observed.<sup>74</sup>

Presumption of guilt and the bullying methods of investigators figure prominently amongst the concerns voiced in the debates publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta, the only difference being - and it is a major one - that the criticisms are never expressed in the context of a discussion on the use of the criminal procedure to repress political dissent. It is, however, to the paper's credit that in the increasingly repressive political climate of the late sixties, it should have continued to raise issues that are an integral part of the human rights debate.

The importance of the discussions publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta lies as much in the outspoken defence of some far-reaching reforms of the criminal procedure as in the exposure of divergent currents in the legal profession. Apart from a couple of hardliners keen to reassert the supposedly infallible objectivity of the procuracy, most contributors can be broadly divided into two groups: those who argue for a stronger defence, yet suggest only minor reforms that would not radically modify the existing division of powers between prosecution and defence; and those who question the dual role of the procuracy as

prosecutor and supervisor of legality, arguing that a strong defence will be possible only if the investigation is taken away from the procuracy and if the criminal procedure becomes overall more adversarial, possibly with something resembling a jury.

Although several contributions contain fairly conservative arguments, on the whole the debates on the criminal procedure reveal a heartfelt and openly voiced concern for the vulnerability of Soviet citizens caught up in the judicial system whatever the seriousness or nature of the charges brought against them. The debates raise crucial questions as to the nature of the Soviet state, which in the justice system is represented by the procuracy. Some contributors cling to the notion of a benign state, the interests of which fully coincide with those of its citizens. Others, by challenging the excessive powers of the procuracy, intimate, or in the case of Trusov, for example, openly argue that citizens' rights cannot always be reliably protected by the state. It is frequently the case that they must be protected against it.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See R. W. Makepeace, Marxist Ideology and Soviet Criminal Law, London: Croom Helm, 1980, p.234; and W. E. Butler, Soviet Law, London: Butterworths, second edition, 1988, p.234: since that time the procuracy has been the most prestigious component of the Soviet legal profession; see also A. Vaksberg, Vychinski - Le procureur de Staline, Paris: Albin Michel, 1991, p.177; Vaksberg interestingly remarks that in 1939 the all-powerful Procurator General of the USSR was replaced by someone nobody had heard of, which shows that the procuracy was not a key position in itself.
2. Butler, op. cit. p.25 and pp.107-15; and E. L. Johnson, An Introduction to the Soviet Law System, London: Methuen, 1969, p.23 and pp.133-7.
3. Butler, op. cit. chapter 19.
4. Feifer argues that the role played by Soviet judges is typical of civil law systems in general: 'The Soviet judge, like his French counterpart ... is an active player - the most active, questioning and examining, carrying out the civil law tradition that the court itself must direct the search for truth rather than limit itself principally to the evidence offered by the 'sides''; see G. Feifer, Justice in Moscow, London: The Bodley Head, 1964, p.18.
5. See Johnson, op. cit. chapter 5; Butler, op. cit. chapter 19; Feifer, op. cit. p.17; and H. J. Berman, Justice in the USSR - An Interpretation of Soviet Law, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963, pp.238-43.
6. K. Yurev, 'Delo budnichnoe, obydennoe...', LG, 1967, No.3, p.11.
7. Evg. Bogat, 'Istina, istina - Sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1971, No.47, p.13.
8. See also N. Chetunova, 'Na tribune - advokat...', LG, 1967, No.47, p.13: Chetunova reviews a volume of speeches for the defence by Yakov Semenovich Kiselev, a famous barrister in Leningrad. She emphasizes Kiselev's liberalism as he argues that it is vitally important to study the personality of the defendant, in particular, in order to establish whether or not the crime has been premeditated.
9. Ya. S. Kiselev, 'Sud'ya - Shtrikhi k portretu sovremennika', LG, 1967, No.9, p.11.
10. Ya. Kiselev, 'Doverie - Sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1970, No.4, p.11; Ya. Kiselev, 'Prostoe delo - sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1970, No.50, p.11.
11. Yan. Polishchuk, 'Pravedlivost' s pripuskom...', LG, 1967, No.32, p.12.
12. Ol'ga Chaikovskaya, '"Priznanie" - Sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1969, No.48, p.13 and No.49, p.13.
13. See Johnson, op. cit. pp.56-8.
14. Ol'ga Chaikovskaya, '"Priznanie" - Sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1969, No.48, p.13.
15. According to Feifer it is usually the case that if witnesses change their minds and the oral testimony in court

diverges from what is written in the investigator's report, the oral testimony is regarded with great suspicion. Feifer also gives several examples of confessions obtained under moral pressure. See Feifer, op. cit. p.86 and pp.91-3.

16. O. Chaikovskaya, '"Priznanie" - Sudebnyi ocherk', LG, 1969, No.49. p.13.

17. O. Chaikovskaya, 'Velichie suda', LG, 1970, No.3, p.12.

18. Berman, op. cit. p.71.

19. Chaikovskaya, loc. cit.

20. A. Rozanov, 'Vo imya istiny', LG, 1970, No.50, p.11.

21. A. Vaksberg, 'Eto byli vy!', LG, 1971, No.46, p.12.

22. K. Simis, USSR: Secrets of a Corrupt Society, London, Melbourne, Toronto: J. M. Dent & sons, 1982, p.71.

23. Butler, op. cit. p.101.

24. Feifer, op. cit. p.80.

25. Butler, op. cit. p.101.

26. Simis, op. cit. p.69.

27. Feifer, op. cit. p.81.

28. Chetunova wrote scathingly critical articles about the authorities' housing policies in rural areas. See, for example, 'Dom v derevne - kakim emu byt'?', LG, 1967, No.35, pp.10-11.

29. N. Chetunova, 'Sud udalilsya na soveshchanie', LG, 1967, No.13, p.11.

30. R. Rakhunov, 'Sud i narodnye zasedateli', LG, 1967, No.15, p.11.

31. Ibid.

32. A. Goryushkin, 'Do i posle sudebnogo soveshchaniya'; I. Barkan, 'Utochneniya i dopolneniya'; and letter from I. Boronenko, LG, 1967, No.26, p.12.

33. I. Perlov, 'Za i protiv', LG, 1967, No.29, p.11.

34. Ya. Kiselev, 'Kogda idet sudebnyi protsess...', LG, 1967, No.24, p.13.

35. Zh. Medvedev, Gorbachev, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p.42.

36. Vaksberg, op. cit. pp.29-30: Kerenskii himself was a renowned lawyer whose clients included the bolshevik members of the Duma accused of high treason.

37. Butler, op. cit. pp.80-90.

38. See Vaksberg, op. cit. p.160 and p.41: Vyshinsky was appointed president of the Moscow advokatura in the early twenties. He remained in this post only a few months, long enough however, it would seem, to contribute to the transformation of the advokatura into a pretence of justice.

39. Feifer, op. cit. p.245.

40. Johnson, op. cit. p.56.

41. Johnson, op. cit. p.236.

42. Feifer, op. cit. p.97; see also Johnson, op. cit. p.56.

43. Letter from M. Blagovolina followed by a short piece from the editors, LG, 1969, No.42, p.13; and G. Z. Anashkin, 'Advokat: prava i problemy', LG, 1970, No.2, p.11.

44. A. Vaksberg, 'Venetsianskie medal'ony', LG, 1970, No.10, p.12.

45. Professor M. S. Strogovich, who died on the eve of his 90th birthday only a few months before Gorbachev was appointed General Secretary, seems to have succeeded in remaining a respected jurist, despite having rubbed shoulders with some of the most sinister figures of Stalinism. In his book on Vyshinsky, A. Vaksberg relates how in the thirties Strogovich closely collaborated with the Procurator General on his study of The Theory of Evidence in Soviet Law; but in later years he 'timidly and tactfully, yet unreservedly' challenged Vyshinsky's theories, persistently defending, in particular, the principle of presumption of innocence; see Vaksberg, op. cit. p.160 and pp.190-1.

46. A. D. Boikov, 'Chto zhe meshaet zashchite', LG, 1970, No.6, p.13; M. S. Strogovich, 'Zashchitnik prizvan zashchishchat'...', LG, 1970, No.10, p.12; and 'Slovo predostavlyaetsya advokatu...', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

47. 'Slovo predostavlyaetsya advokatu', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

48. L. Fris, 'Vinoven?', LG, 1970, No.6, p.13.

49. S. Berezovskaya, 'Sovmestnaya deyatel'nost', a ne edinoborstvo', LG, 1970, No.15, p.13.

50. See, for example, Johnson, op. cit. p.137; and Butler, op. cit. p.114 and pp.360-2.

51. A. Giganov, 'Edinoborstvo vo imya istiny!', LG, 1970, No.20, p.13.

52. See also A. Polyak, 'Pravo na zashchitu', LG, 1971, No.5, p.11: this is a positive review of a book aimed at the general public by I. D. Perlov, who argues the case for the defence.

53. I. Perlov, 'Zashchitnik, obvinyaemyi, prokuror', LG, 1970, No.22, p.12.

54. V. Statkus, 'Ustanavlenie istiny', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

55. M. Malyarov, 'Edinoborstvo podlinnoye i mnimoe', LG, 1970, No.27, pp.12-13.

56. A. Trusov, 'Vershite delo sud!', LG, 1970, No.29, p.12. Some Western observers have also suggested that Soviet investigators be answerable to the courts rather than the procuracy. Johnson, however, interestingly remarks that Soviet courts have frequently been criticized for being too 'prosecution-minded' by both Western and Soviet critics; see Johnson, op. cit. p.146.

57. Ibid.

58. See 'Byulleten' Verkhovnogo suda RSFSR', No.4, 1967, p.6., as quoted in the course of the round table, 'Slovo predostavlyaetsya advokatu...', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

59. 'Slovo predostavlyaetsya advokatu...', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

60. A. Vaksberg, 'Pervaya komandirovka - zapiski advokata', LG, 1969, No.42, p.13.

61. Letter from M. Blagovolina, LG, 1969, No.44, p.11; and letter from G. Lyubarskaya, which follows that of L. Fris, LG, 1970, No.6, p.13.

62. Boikov and Strogovich, loc. cit.

63. Johnson, op. cit. p.118.

64. Butler points out that in the Soviet Union defence lawyers appear in court in 70% of the criminal cases and take part in only one third of the preliminary investigations; see Butler, op. cit. p.89.

65. A. Sukharev, 'Problemy advokatury: itogi diskussii', LG, 1971, No.19, p.12.

66. M. S. Strogovich, 'Zashchitnik prizvan zashchishchat'...', LG, 1970, No.10, p.12.

67. 'Slovo predostavlyaetsya advokatu...', LG, 1970, No.32, p.11.

68. See note 45; the author of the review is the Minister of Justice, A. Sukharev, the same person, it would seem, who in 1971, in his capacity as first Deputy-Minister of Justice of the USSR, wrote the uninspiring official reply to the debate on the role of the defence analysed in this chapter.

69. M. Walker, 'Where Justice is Flawed but the Lawyers Thrive', Wednesday 3 September 1986.

70. N. Lampert, Legality and Reform in the USSR: The Issues, Discussion Papers, General Series G8, Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, August 1988, pp.9-19; see also Butler, op. cit. pp.364-5.

71. Lampert, op. cit. p.17; and Walker, loc. cit.

72. See Part IV, introduction.

73. See L. Alexeyeva, Soviet Dissent, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987, pp.267-82 and p.310; and M. Hopkins, Russia's Underground Press - The Chronicle of Current Events, New York: Praeger, 1983, p.13 and p.23; Hopkins points out that the authorities, i.e., the KGB, the state prosecution and the courts were anxious to give a legal appearance to the proceedings against the editors of the Chronicle: '...[they] were not really show trials, not in the unambiguous way that Krasin and Yakir were put on display. They seemed more like experiments, to determine how far the authorities might move toward a "legal" solution to political dissent'; see Hopkins, op. cit. pp.110-11; see also Il'ya Mil'shtein on the human rights movement in Ogonek, July 1990, p.20.

74. Alexeyeva, op. cit. pp.277-8.

## CONCLUSION

In many respects Literaturnaya gazeta deserved its reputation as the 'Hyde Park of Socialism', publicizing a range of debates on societal issues which did not pose an immediate threat to the political leadership.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that the editorial board cooperated with the Brezhnevite establishment, carefully avoiding controversies no longer tolerated by the conservatives. The absence of material investigating the country's Stalinist past clearly indicated that the organ of the Writers' Union would not take on the more seditious battles which became the hallmark of Novyi mir during the Thaw. The limitations of the economic debates were also indicative of the paper's acceptance of the political parameters imposed by the post-Thaw conservative leadership. The Party's monopoly of power was nowhere challenged, political responsibilities were never discussed, large-scale corruption amidst the rank of the bureaucracy was conveniently overlooked. In many respects Literaturnaya gazeta was indeed typical of what is now commonly referred to as the 'period of stagnation'.

Ironically, however, one of Literaturnaya gazeta's greatest achievements during this period was to publish material reflecting the demoralization of Soviet society and its inability to change within the existing structures.



Although it operated under the close supervision of the Party, the paper did not attempt to conceal the failures of the system. Soviet society frequently emerged as being morally corrupt, riddled with individualism, suspicion and petty authoritarianism. The society whose mission it was to become the embodiment of the collectivist dream had become an atomized community whose members showed little civic responsibility. Deprived of consumer rights, individuals were at the mercy of incompetent and faceless state-run bureaucracies, unconcerned by the plurality of needs. Deprived of the rights to a strong legal defence, individuals were overpowered by a judiciary system dominated by the state procuracy. Literaturnaya gazeta contributed to bringing discredit upon the existing system by discussing problems affecting the whole population. It also voiced the more specific concerns of professionals, who felt hampered in their work and careers by the bureaucratization of society.

A great many contributions were permeated with a feeling of deep frustration born of an awareness that these criticisms had been expressed many times before to no avail. Yet Literaturnaya gazeta gave the reform-minded section of the intelligentsia the opportunity of sustaining a number of debates which began in the late fifties. Academics, professionals and journalists continued to raise social and economic problems left unsolved by Khrushchev and unlikely to be tackled by the Brezhnev administration, as if holding the

fort until the coming of a political climate more conducive to reforms.

The subversiveness of Literaturnaya gazeta, however, did not lie only in its effort to highlight the shortcomings of Soviet society. It was instrumental in promoting liberal values which ran counter to the official dogmas on which the system rested. The theory of collectivism was overtly challenged and rejected by numerous contributors on the ground that it hindered the harmonious development of the individual and, therefore, of society as a whole, the organization of society depending as much on collective action as on individual talents. This fundamental criticism of official ideology contained the seeds of a more comprehensive and radical questioning of the system. The word 'collective' could indeed be understood to refer to various units operating at different levels of society, from the work collective to the state apparatus, allegedly responsible for representing the interests of the collective. Obviously the question was not raised with the same degree of openness at all levels. It was most outspokenly discussed in the context of everyday life, and in more abstract terms by educationalists, psychologists and sociologists.

Furthermore, an explicit link was established between the neglect of the individual and the bureaucratic system of management. Criticisms of the bureaucracy were not a new phenomenon in the Soviet press. All leaders, including Stalin, had been quick to blame the failures of the system on

'bureaucratism' and the incompetence of individual officials or collectives, never acknowledging, however, that 'bureaucratism' was part and parcel of the system. But the harsh criticisms systematically levelled at planning authorities, ministries and state-run services in the second section of Literaturnaya gazeta suggest that public opinion no longer believed in the ability of the bureaucracies to reform themselves.

While the controversies were never overtly political, politics was never far away. The rejection of collectivism was the first stage of a debate on the nature of democracy. No longer was it assumed that the collective was always right. No longer was it assumed that the principles on which collectives operate are automatically just and sound, whether they are condoned by the majority of the group or imposed by individuals. The supremacy of the collective which had been used to justify repressive or authoritarian practices was no longer taken for granted. The supremacy of the highest institution that claimed to represent the interests of both the collective and the individual, i.e., the state, was also indirectly questioned, in particular in the debate on the legal procedure, with some contributors declaring the procuracy, which represents the state in the judiciary system, incapable of protecting the legal rights of the individual.

Other debates contained the seeds of a discussion on the socio-economic nature of socialism. Marxism-Leninism had

always been able to accommodate anti-egalitarian policies on the ground that economic conditions during the period of transition toward communism demanded that rewards be distributed in accordance with work rather need. Yet the belief shared by many contributors that material incentives are among the most efficient ways of involving individuals in a collective endeavour could also be the mark of a liberal way of thinking, especially when coupled with an outspoken defence of the privately hired construction brigades (shabashniki). The emphasis placed on the role and rights of the consumer, while weakened by the absence of any talk of a market economy, also contributed to challenging the Soviet brand of socialism, which had always entrusted the state with the control of all activity, including economic performance.

While promoting a more individual-centred type of society, Literaturnaya gazeta highlighted behavioural changes that testified to the Soviet population's actual resistance to the collectivist ethos and to the power of the bureaucracies. Obviously, the list of 'spontaneous social phenomena' investigated by the paper was far from being exhaustive. Yet the material on unorganized leisure activities, unsupervised discussion clubs or privately hired work teams acknowledged Soviet people's determination to find alternatives outside the structures provided by the state and the Party. These initiatives taken by large sections of the population did not meet with the same degree of approval from all contributors. The debates nevertheless emphasized that

the old values were not questioned exclusively by the 'chattering classes', thus pointing to the widening gulf between the polity and society at large.

It has been pointed out that similarities can be observed between the legal and illegal cultures which developed in the Soviet Union from the mid-sixties to the mid-eighties. Hosking regards samizdat and legally published literature 'as part of one Soviet literature', issues raised by the Thaw being discussed further in both types of publications. 'It is true', Hosking argues, 'that *samizdat* works are usually more outspoken and unequivocal: but what they say is being reiterated in Soviet publications in ways that the informed and sensitive reader cannot fail to understand.'<sup>2</sup> While paying tribute to the courage of dissident activists and writers, Lewin remarks that 'what unofficial manifestoes say often dots the "i's" on what is largely expressed in published books'.<sup>3</sup> Kagarlitsky suggests that the legal and illegal cultures actually influenced each other - some readers having access to both and some authors contributing to both -, which, in the end, had the effect of making the censorship more liberal.<sup>4</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta certainly tackled issues which were discussed in both legal and dissident literature. The theme of byt, the indignities and frustrations of everyday life and the decline in moral standards, figured as prominently in the paper and the legally published novels of Yurii Trifonov as in the works of Aleksandr Zinoviev, one of the most famous

figures of Soviet dissidence under Brezhnev. Zinoviev's extreme vision of the typical Soviet work collective as nothing better than a robbers' den recalls some of the less virulent, yet disenchanted contributions published on the subject by Literaturnaya gazeta.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the concerns voiced in the paper by members of the legal profession echoed the legalistic demands of the human rights activists. The creation in 1978 of an illegal group 'for the Defence of the Rights of Invalids in the USSR' is further evidence of a strong link between legal and illegal culture.<sup>6</sup>

Literaturnaya gazeta belonged to a broad cultural movement that transcended narrowly defined notions of legality and was instrumental in promoting values which were to influence the 'new thinking' advocated by Gorbachev and his advisers in the first years of glasnost and perestroika. The 'deindividualization' of society, the bureaucratization of all aspects of public life and the egalitarian ethos were constantly denounced as the sources of Soviet society's inertia by people closely connected with the new leadership.<sup>7</sup> The rights of the individual were radically re-examined by the legal profession, and the bureaucracies were publicly attacked by the new leaders in a way never seen before. Gorbachev's castigations of Gosplan and the ministries at the XXVII Party Congress had been heralded by Zaslavskaya's famous 1984 Novosibirsk Memorandum which unambiguously stated that the success of economic reforms depended on the government's ability to break down the resistance of the

bureaucracy.<sup>8</sup> Measures were taken with the aim of re-introducing some degree of private farming; green issues, actively publicized by numerous informal organizations, began to be treated more seriously, sexual politics was discussed more candidly.

While there is evidence that both legal and illegal cultures contributed to the 'new thinking' of the mid-eighties, it remains true that samizdat literature went much further than legal publications in its criticism of the regime. Literaturnaya gazeta did not cover all the aspects of Soviet dissent. Three main contentious issues, which were to become of paramount importance under Gorbachev, were nowhere discussed in the paper, namely religion, nationalities and the labour movement.<sup>9</sup> It has been suggested that the democratic dissident movement was in fact little interested in these questions. After all, the nationalist and religious dissident groups operated separately from the human rights activists, and what Alexeyeva calls 'the movement for social and economic rights', which was dominated by the intelligentsia, began only in the late seventies and was still at an embryonic stage by the mid-eighties.<sup>10</sup>

The lack of debates on the nationality question certainly makes Literaturnaya gazeta a very 'Russian' Soviet newspaper whether or not its readers were themselves sensitive to other nationalities' concerns.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the almost total absence of material on the industrial working class, and labour relations in general, begs

questions as to the paper's commitment to socialist values. An individual-centred society, universal human values, even the promotion of anti-egalitarian wage policies, can belong to a socialist discourse, but only if these liberal principles are backed up by a social programme defining a balanced sharing of responsibilities between the collective and the individual.

Shlapentokh argues that the '"personalization" of Soviet society' lay 'at the centre of the liberals' dream in the 1960s'.<sup>12</sup> This theme continued to dominate the debates publicized by Literaturnaya gazeta in the post-Thaw period. Concentrating on the 'mentionable' issues, the paper demonstrated the evil effects of the official ideology and its failure to keep up with the *de facto* evolution of Soviet society. The Party is never criticized, yet the values promoted by the paper have little to do with party ideology. Literaturnaya gazeta must be counted among the publications that contributed to the slow debunking of official dogmas, which began at the XX Party Congress and led to the demise of Marxism-Leninism in the early nineties.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See chapter 1, section 2: Chakovskii is reported to have been told by one of Brezhnev's aides that LG was 'a sort of socialist Hyde Park', i.e., that it was seen by the leadership 'as a medium through which a wide range of establishment opinions could be voiced without committing the leaders to an official position'; see L. Dzirkals, T. Gustafson and A. R. Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR, Santa Monica, California: The Rand Corporation, 1982, p.122; and V. Perel'man, Pokinutaya Rossiya, Volume 2, 'Krushenie', pp.163-7: Perel'man, who became gradually disenchanted with the paper, wholeheartedly subscribes to the 'Hyde Park socialism' theory, accusing LG of having only created an 'illusion of democracy' (p.166).

2. G. Hosking, Beyond Socialist Realism - Soviet Fiction Since Ivan Denisovich, London: Granada Publishing, 1980, p.ix.

3. M. Lewin, Stalinism and the Seeds of Soviet Reform - The Debates of the 1960s, London: Pluto Press, 1991, p.245.

4. B. Kagarlitsky, The Thinking Reed: Intellectuals and the Soviet State, 1917 to the Present, London: Verso, 1988, pp.212-15; see also a discussion of this issue in R. J. Marsh, Soviet Fiction since Stalin - Science, Politics and Literature, London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986, pp.316-19: Marsh questions the notion that there are two completely separate literatures, a 'truthful samizdat and émigré literature' and a 'false literature published in the USSR'.

5. Ph. Hanson, 'Soviet State and Society - Alexander Zinoviev: Totalitarianism from Below', Survey, Vol.26, No.1(114), Winter 1982, pp.39-48.

6. L. Alexeyeva, Soviet Dissent, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987, pp.411-13; the plight of disabled war veterans, including those from Afghanistan, continued to be much discussed under Gorbachev; see, The Posters of Glasnost and Perestroika, Penguin Book, 1989, for example, poster No.120.

7. See, for example, E. Teague, 'Soviet Theoreticians Debate - 'The Human Factor'', Radio Liberty Bulletins, August 25, 1989, pp.10-12; and R. Walker, 'The Psychology of Perestroika or The Sinatra Doctrine', Detente, No.16, 1989, pp.7-10; both articles examine the views of Igor Kon; see also poster No.43 in Posters of Glasnost and Perestroika, op. cit.: 'A featureless, identical mass of faces spell "We" in Russian. If the individual personality is suppressed there is no true collective'.

8. Vl. Shlapentokh, Soviet Ideology in the Period of Glasnost' - Responses to Brezhnev's Stagnation, New York: Praeger, 1988, p.133 and p.128.

9. For the different types of dissident movements, see Alexeyeva, op. cit.

10. Alexeyeva, op. cit., p.401.

11. Some articles about rural housing and the environment have Russian nationalist overtones; but in no way

can it be said that LG was the mouthpiece of the Russophile movement.

12. Vl. Shlapentokh, Soviet Intellectuals and Political Power - The Post Stalin Era, London: I. B. Tauris and Co, 1990, p.159.

## APPENDIX 1

### SPACE ALLOCATED TO SUBJECT AREAS (1)

1. This table is based on 26 issues of Literaturnaya gazeta (second section) from 4 January 1967 to 28 June 1967.

2. The same articles can be included in two different categories; for example, an article on marriage laws is listed in the section on women as well as in the section on law.

3. The subject areas do not necessarily have a clearly defined counterpart in the paper; for example, there is no women's page in Literaturnaya gazeta.

Subject Areas	Approx. Number of Words
1. International Life (analyses)	78,500
2. International Life (short news p.9)	75,000
3. International Life (culture & the Arts)	78,250
4. Economic Issues	57,450
5. Arts and Literature	56,400
6. Science and Technology	39,000
7. Moral issues	33,300
The Collective and the Individual	
8. Work	19,650
9. Women	17,500
10. Law	17,250
11. Services ( <u>byt</u> )	17,100
12. Sociology	16,500
13. Education	13,500
14. Environmental Issues	10,150
15. Housing / Town-planning	10,000
16. Leniniana	10,050
17. Tourism	8,200
18. Journalism	6,600
19. Local Government	2,800

N.B.

1. International Life (3): most of it is on the Arts (16,000 words on Life Abroad)

2. The high figure (56,400) for Arts and Literature (5) should be interpreted with caution. Most of the material listed in this category (41,000 words) is made up of reports on the IV Congress of Soviet writers. If it was not for this exceptional event, the figure for Arts and Literature would be around 15,000 words.

## RELATIVE POPULARITY OF THE VARIOUS SECTIONS

This table is from "Literaturnaya gazeta" i ee auditoriya, I. D. Fomicheva (ed.), Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1978, p.47. It is based on a survey carried out in 1973.

Sections	% of subscribers reading the section regularly
Domestic Life	96
The Arts	91
Satire and Humour	90
Literary Publications	89
International Life	88
Foreign Culture	86
Soviet Literature and Literary Criticism	71

## RELATIVE POPULARITY OF THE VARIOUS TOPICS ON DOMESTIC LIFE

This table is from "Literaturnaya gazeta" i ee auditoriya, I. D. Fomicheva (ed.), Moscow: Izdatel'stvo moskovskogo universiteta, 1978, pp. 59-60. It is based on a survey carried out in 1973.

Topics	% of subscribers reading the articles on these topics regularly
Private life, marriage, the family, role of men and women within the family and in society	88
The future of man and mankind	78
Fight against pollution, protection of the environment	69
Teaching and education problems	68
Fight against anti-social phenomena	66
Services and trade, transport and communications	65
Legal proceedings, legislation, raising citizens' awareness of law and legality	62
Urbanization, urban growth, urban life	61
Problems with leisure time, organization of leisure	60
Medicine and the health service	59
Relationships within the work collective, the rights and responsibilities of managers	58
Problems of population and migration	57
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### APPENDIX 3 (Cont/d)

Application of discoveries and inventions	51
Development of social sciences and sciences studying the individual	49
Moral responsibility for disabled war veterans	47
Problems of economic management	45
The economic reform, rational management, scientific organization of work, improvement of the wage system	43
Individual and collective creative work in the sciences	40
Work of the state apparatus	39
Rational distribution of the productive forces of the country, in particular, problems in the development of the North, Siberia and the Far East	38
Socio-economic and cultural problems in rural areas	23
Development of socialist competition	18

## SPACE ALLOCATED TO SUBJECT AREAS (2)

1. This table is based on a close reading of Literaturnaya gazeta (second section) over a period of five years from January 1967 to December 1971.

2. The organization of the material differs slightly from the way it is presented in appendix 1. Some subject areas do not figure at all, either because they are given very little attention in the paper or because they do not pertain to domestic social and economic issues. Articles on strictly scientific and technical matters have also been left aside.

Subject Areas	Approx. Number of Words
Economic Issues (Industry & Agriculture)	530,000
Services and Housing ( <u>byt</u> )	300,000
Women / The Family	210,000
Law	180,000
Moral Issues The Individual and the Collective	150,000
Protection of the Environment (Cultural and Natural)	130,000
Education (Secondary and Higher)	110,000
Research / Specialists	60,000
Youth	25,000
Health Service	20,000
Sociology	18,000

## APPENDIX 5

### COMPOSITION OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF LITERATURNAYA GAZETA (Dec. 1962 - Dec. 1977)

- underlined: new members and new functions (dep. ed. = deputy editor; sec. = secretary)  
- the dates indicate when the changes became apparent in the paper

27/12/1962

Barabash Yu. Ya. (dep. ed.)  
Bolkhovitinov V. N.  
Bondarev Yu. V.  
Galin B. A.  
Guliya G. D.  
Korabel'nikov G. M.  
Leont'ev B. L.  
Medvedev V. S.  
Prudkov O. N.  
Radov G. G.  
Rozhdestvenskii R. I.  
Soloukhin V. A.  
Surkov E. D.  
Surovtsev Yu. I.  
Terteryan A. S. (dep. ed.)

(15)

1/1/1966

Blinov A.  
Galanov B.  
Galin B. A.  
Guliya G. D.  
Komarov Yu.  
Makarov A.  
Markov G.  
Medvedev V. S.  
Narovchatov S.  
Prudkov O. N.  
Surovtsev Yu. (dep. ed.)  
Terteryan A. S. (dep. ed.)

(12)

9 left

Barabash  
Bolkhovitinov  
Bondarev  
Korabel'nikov  
Leont'ev  
Radov  
Rozhdestvenskii  
Soloukhin  
Surkov

### Changes in 1966

4 joined: Syrokonskii V. A. (1st dep. ed.) (12/7/1966)  
Gorbunov V. A. (6/10/1966)  
Smirnov-Cherkezov A. I. (13/10/1966)  
Krivitskii E. A. (dep. ed.) (22/12/1966)

3 left: Blinov (27/9/1966)  
Komarov (13/12/1966)  
Surovtsev (22/12/1966)



APPENDIX 5 (Cont/d)

1/1/1967

Aitmatov Ch.  
Galanov B.  
Gorbunov V. A. (1st sec.)  
Guliya G. D.  
Zheleznikov V.  
Krivitskii E. A. (dep. ed.)  
Leonov L.  
Makarov A.  
Markov G.  
Medvedev V. S.  
Narovchatov S.  
Novichenko L.  
Pankina L.  
Prudkov O. N.  
Samarin R.  
Smirnov-Cherkezov A. I.  
Subbotin V.  
Syrokonskii V. A. (1st dep. ed.)  
Terteryan A. S. (dep. ed.)

(19)

1 left:

Galin

End of 1977

Those who stayed on:

Aitmatov  
Galanov  
Gorbunov  
Guliya  
Krivitskii  
Markov  
Novichenko  
Prudkov  
Subbotin  
Syrokonskii  
Terteryan

Those who left:

Zheleznikov (26/6/1967)  
Leonov (4/6/1969)  
Narovchatov (24/12/1975)  
Pankina (22/1/1969)  
Smirnov-Cherkezov  
(25/8/1971)

3 died:

Makarov (2/12/1967)  
Medvedev (tribute on  
28/10/1970)  
Samarin (tribute on  
6/2/1974)

## CONTENT ANALYSIS OF A. CHAKOVSKII'S NOVELS:

GOD ZHIZNI (1957) AND DROGI, KOTORYE MY VYBIRAEM (1960)

Chakovskii's 'very positive' hero is Andrei Aref'ev, a young graduate fresh from the Moscow Transport Institute, who cannot wait to take up his first job at Zapolyarsk in the Far North. The year is 1954, and the sequel takes us to 1956 with numerous references to the XX Party Congress.

Through the character of Andrei, Chakovskii voices some of his views on how post-Stalin Soviet society should evolve and what the intelligentsia's contribution ought to be. Chakovskii certainly goes out of his way to emphasize the urgent need for change - to deny this fact in the restless climate of the fifties would have probably cost him his credibility - but his criticisms rest on the unimaginative assumption that the system goes wrong only when people fail to make it go right.

Andrei is first of all presented as the heir of a glorious past, which he perceives as a constant source of inspiration for future achievements. His bedside books are the two classics of socialist realism, The Mutiny by Furmanov and How the Steel Was Tempered by Ostrovskii.<sup>1</sup> Imbued with the values promoted by such edifying literature and proud of his country's achievements, Andrei feels sorry that his

generation should have 'missed' the first five-year plan, the Great Patriotic War, the October Revolution, the Civil War, Magnitogorsk, Komsomol'sk and Lenin in the flesh.<sup>2</sup>

The reader who fails to be uplifted by images of revolutionary romanticism might deem Andrei to be something of a bad-tempered bore. Chakovskii does allow his character to be a little uncouth, but only because this slight shortcoming is to be evidence of his honesty and laudable determination to achieve his goals.

Chakovskii endowed his heroic young specialist of the fifties with all the qualities which, according to the myths of socialist realism, enabled the first generation of communists to build the new Soviet society. Loyalty to the Party, selfless hard work, a taste for fighting natural elements and political opponents alike, and a constant craving for action and 'building', all these admirable qualities justify the hero's self-righteousness and ruthlessness toward enemies. They can be found in both men and women although one suspects that Chakovskii sees them as being primarily male. Indeed, the female characters seem to deserve the respect of their creator either when they give the hero emotional and ideological support, or when they work 'just like men' ('sovsem ne po-zhenski').<sup>3</sup>

However, the old virtues are seen in the context of the fifties' political confusion, which is reflected in Andrei's occasional lack of confidence and recurrent doubts. Needless

to say, he will see through the enemies of socialism and 'find the right way'.

Although the second novel contains a few pages reminding us of the endemic hostility of the West (in Moscow Andrei meets a lonely and alcoholic Englishman, who, we are to understand, welcomes the XX Congress for all the wrong reasons), Chakovskii is more concerned with denouncing internal enemies. Andrei has to fight against a whole series of home-bred 'baddies', who in the end will get their comeuppance.

The main 'negative characters' are party members who hold up the development of the economy and social welfare, and consequently the progress of socialism, by using the system to protect their own petty interests. The engineer, Kramov, a falsehearted cynical careerist, gets particularly bad treatment from the author. His main concern is to fulfil the plan at all cost, and while he makes sure that the workers receive their monthly bonuses, so he can rely on their cooperation, he feels only contempt for them and does not care two hoots about their living conditions.

The more sympathetically drawn character of Kondakov, the managing director of the industrial complex, belongs to the old school of managers who would do anything for a quiet life and looks back nostalgically on Stalin's time when young enthusiasts like Andrei could be easily silenced. His retirement, at the end of the second novel, seems to suggest

that this complacent and timid style of management will gradually disappear along with the old generation.

Andrei discovers his colleagues' bad faith and apathy when trying to solve two major problems at work. Horrified by the appalling living conditions of his workers, he sees providing them with decent housing as his responsibility. As Kramov and Kondakov do not support his initiative on the basis that there is an acute shortage of cement in the plant and throughout the country, Andrei puts his case to Baulin, the secretary of the regional party committee, who gives him the go-ahead. The same Baulin, definitely a very positive character, helps him a second time, albeit indirectly, when a year later Andrei asks him to supply him with more cement to finish the construction of the tunnel. Baulin gives him some benevolent advice which seems to sum up Chakovskii's views on how the country's economic difficulties should be solved. The thing to do is to 'think', in other words to use one's wit and be resourceful, rather than beg the authorities for something which is not available. Fortunately, and very conveniently, Andrei finds out that metallic sheets can be used instead of cement to reinforce the walls of the tunnel.

Chakovskii paints a far from idyllic picture of Soviet society in the fifties. It is not altogether denied that shortages, low standards of living, social problems, such as widespread alcoholism, might be to some extent the result of poor management. At the same time, it is made perfectly clear that the problem does not lie in the nature of the economic

system or the Party, but rather in long-standing harmful practices, which, in the end, make a mockery of the system. For instance, Kondakov is reluctant to assist Andrei in getting some more cement because, when the tunnel directly linking the mine of phosphorous ore with his refinery is built, his plan target will be raised. Indeed, he will no longer be able to blame bad weather conditions for slowing down production. While Kondakov's approach is severely criticized, nowhere is it suggested that new mechanisms are needed to prevent such practices from taking place. The underlying message is that good communists will make this unquestionably good system work.

The conflicts between Andrei and his opponents are also discussed in political terms, whether in private conversations between the characters or in party meetings. (Local councils do not seem to have any role to play.) It is significant that Chakovskii does not only condemn careerists and complacent party members, but also viciously attacks those whose criticisms are supposedly levelled at the wrong people. While disillusioned Soviet citizens might have had their faith in the system rekindled by the indignant and tireless crusader portrayed in the character of Andrei, the liberals gathered around Novyi Mir could not have failed to notice Chakovskii's lesson in how to handle criticism.

The character accused of publicizing ill-advised criticism happens to be the local journalist, Polesskii. (It is difficult not to suspect Chakovskii, the journal and

newspaper editor, of wanting to give journalists a warning.) Polesskii is eventually expelled of the Party for unfairly assessing the work of the planning organizations and failing to point out that the shortage of cement results from the implementation of an ambitious housing programme throughout the country. Polesskii made the additional mistake of attacking Kondakov not so much for making the wrong decisions, but for enjoying a secure position, unlike the workers, who might find themselves out of work overnight for lack of supply. His articles are judged to be defeatist and irresponsible inasmuch as they can only undermine the workers' faith in their managers and leaders. Criticism should only aim at reinforcing the cohesion of Soviet society.<sup>4</sup>

Chakovskii's acknowledgement of the need for some changes stems from his fear of instability. He seems, indeed, to be acutely aware of discontent amongst the population; hence the emphasis on the nationwide housing programme and the reference to the brand-new Yugo-Zapadnyi district on the outskirts of Moscow. It is also suggested that Soviet workers' behaviour might fall short of what is expected of revolutionary heroes because they still live in unsatisfactory conditions and tend to be kept away from the decision-making process.<sup>5</sup>

Although the workers have a certain role to play in the novels, they are very much in the background. While Chakovskii still clings to the romantic and convenient idea

of a revolutionary class of workers adhering wholeheartedly to the revised goals of the Party, the 'leading role' seems, in fact, to have been surreptitiously handed over to the technical intelligentsia. It is Andrei's responsibility to improve his workers' living conditions. (Workers indulge in heavy drinking only when they are not provided with an alternative such as, for example, a 'house of culture'.) It is also his responsibility to guide them in their choices. (Inspired by good leadership, good, 'real' workers do not desert the factory even if their new job in the same factory means lower wages.) Finally, it is Andrei's responsibility to break through the army of bureaucrats, up to and including those in Moscow if necessary, to obtain what the factory needs in order to function adequately.

Chakovskii's claim that the intelligentsia is to play an increasingly important role in the management of Soviet society is probably the most progressive message in the story of Andrei. It indicates an awareness of irreversible social changes and the need to move away from the rule of badly educated apparatchiks. The transformation of Literaturnaya gazeta into a broader forum aimed at the scientific and technical intelligentsia stems precisely from such realization.

However, this broad statement contains many grey areas caused by the author's careful avoidance of any serious investigation into crucial issues, such as, for example, the relationship between the intelligentsia and political power,



or the existence of bureaucratism, which is so keenly denounced throughout the novels. Chakovskii pays lip service to the XX Congress. Only an act of faith can make the reader believe in the Party's proclaimed redemption, and nowhere is it suggested that the Congress should be the beginning of a public debate on the nation's past.

Chakovskii refers to the labour camps with significant offhandedness. Churin, the 'troublemaker', who makes an unsuccessful attempt at setting the workers against Andrei, happens to be - again, very conveniently - an ex-convict. He had been charged with theft of socialist property (like the majority - so we are told - of the people sent to labour camps). Shocked by Andrei's lack of compassion for ex-convicts, a fellow engineer points out to him that he was forgetting the innocent people who also ended up there. Andrei - or is it Chakovskii? - brushes the issue aside, replying that 'one cannot forget', but that it had nothing to do with Churin.<sup>6</sup> It is clear from these two short novels that Chakovskii, unlike his colleagues from Novyi mir, was not prepared to ask awkward questions.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Chakovskii wrote a short tribute to Ostrovskii for the press, which was published in 1971 in a collection of articles entitled Blazhenny li nishchie dukhom?. In this article, 'Stal' plameneet', Chakovskii rates Ostrovskii infinitely more highly than the 'decadent writer' Proust and argues that his novels are undoubtedly relevant for Soviet young people as his heroes set 'examples for any generation of fighters for communism'. Finally, Chakovskii deplores that so many contemporary novels should be so 'anaemic' and wishes there should be more 'writers-fighters'; see 'Stal' plameneet', Blazhenny li nishchie dukhom?, Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1971, pp.109-21.

2. A. B. Chakovskii, God zhizni, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957, p.39.

3. A. B. Chakovskii, Dorogi, kotorye my vybiraem, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1960, p.67.

4. It is what Chakovskii referred to as 'constructive, responsible and businesslike criticism' in an article entitled 'Pisatel' v sovremennom mire'; see Blazhenny nishchie dukhom?, Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1971, pp.85-95.

5. Ibid. pp.8-26: Chakovskii seems to have been similarly concerned with the disaffection of Soviet youth. In the article entitled 'Blazhenny li nishchie dukhom?', he expresses his fear that, unlike their elders, young people could be easily lured into embracing the cynical pragmatism of the West. These two short novels were probably to be his contribution to the teaching of the young.

6. Chakovskii, Dorogi, kotorye my vybiraem, Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1960, p.219.

LEAFLET ADVERTISING THE NEW LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

WINTER 1966



«Литературная газета» будет выходить раз в неделю, но читатели выиграют: ее объем по сравнению с нынешним увеличится на четыре страницы в неделю, то есть на целый номер.

Это позволит значительно углубить, расширить традиционные разделы и рубрики «Литературной газеты» и ввести много нового.

**ЧИТАЯ «ЛИТЕРАТУРНУЮ ГАЗЕТУ», ВЫ СМОЖЕТЕ**

знакомиться с различными мнениями о злободневных проблемах литературы и искусства,

знакомиться с новыми, только что написанными и даже еще не оконченными произведениями прозаиков, поэтов, драматургов.

**ВЫ БУДЕТЕ ИНФОРМИРОВАНЫ О ТОМ,**

какие книги поступят на прилавок в ближайшее время,

какие премьеры ожидают зрителей на театральной сцене,

какие фильмы появятся на экранах — больших и телевизионных.

LEAFLET ADVERTISING THE NEW LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

WINTER 1966

SECOND SIDE

**ВАС, НЕСОМНЕННО, ИНТЕРЕСУЕТ**

мнение писателей, ученых, общественных деятелей в связи с экономической реформой в нашей стране, проблемами народного образования, вопросами морали, этики, права, быта, последними научными открытиями и всеми другими сторонами духовной, общественной, трудовой жизни советского человека.

В еженедельном издании эти темы будут освещаться значительно полнее.

**«ЛИТЕРАТУРНАЯ ГАЗЕТА» БУДЕТ ОТВОДИТЬ  
ЗНАЧИТЕЛЬНО БОЛЬШЕ МЕСТА**

вопросам международного положения, новейшим политическим, социологическим, философским теориям, появляющимся за рубежом, полемике с нашими идеологическими противниками, новостям литературы и искусства всех пяти континентов.

**ВЫ СМОЖЕТЕ ПОСМЕЯТЬСЯ,**

читая острый фельетон, литературную пародию, остроумную эпиграмму, юмористический рассказ. Юмор, в том числе зарубежный, будет широко представлен на страницах новой «Литературной газеты».

**НАКОНЕЦ, ВЫ СМОЖЕТЕ НЕПОСРЕДСТВЕННО ВКЛЮЧИТЬСЯ**

в дискуссии и обсуждения, которые будут вестись на страницах «Литературной газеты», высказать свою точку зрения по любой из волнующих вас тем. «Литературная газета» предоставит гораздо больше места, чем до сих пор, для читательских писем и откликов — это будет специальный раздел в каждом номере.

**ЕЖЕНЕДЕЛЬНАЯ «ЛИТЕРАТУРНАЯ ГАЗЕТА» —  
НЕ ЕЖЕНЕДЕЛЬНИК!**

Это новый тип издания, совмещающий газетную специфику (то есть актуальную общественно-политическую информацию) с публикацией проблемных материалов.

**МЫ УВЕРЕНЫ В ТОМ,**

что и наши постоянные читатели, и наши новые друзья будут выписывать и читать новую «Литературную газету».

ЦЕНА НА ГОД — 7 р. 80 к.  
ЦЕНА ОТДЕЛЬНОГО НОМЕРА — 15 к.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CC	Central Committee
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
<u>Glavlit</u>	Chief Administration for the Preservation of State Secrets
<u>Gosplan</u>	State Planning Committee
KGB	State Security Committee
LG	<u>Literaturnaya gazeta</u>
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NEP	New Economic Policy
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic

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